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ABSTRACT

This report explores ways in which family support and education programs targeted to families with preschool-age children fit within schools, or more specifically, within local community education programs. The issue was examined by means of: (1) an in-depth field study of the Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) initiative at 9 local sites in Minnesota; and (2) a survey of 12 family support and education programs in other states. Both methods of research addressed the issue of community education as the context for family support and education programs, and examined the benefits of such arrangements and the feasibility of more widespread use of the arrangements. An introduction in Chapter I is followed in Chapter II by a summary of the current scope and operation of ECFE in Minnesota and a consideration of factors of design, context, and management that affect local program implementation. Chapter III describes the benefits of basing the ECFE initiative within community education and assesses the degree to which findings in Minnesota may be generalized to local community education-based family support and education programs across the U.S. Conclusions are advanced in Chapter IV. Individual profiles of the 21 local sites studied are included in appendices, as are tables, figures, and other materials. Approximately 50 references are cited. (RH)

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Parent Involvement Program
Guntersville, Alabama

Parent and Family Life Education
La Mesa, California

Amanda's Place
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Parent Growth Program
Des Moines, Iowa

Parent and Child Workshop
Muskegon, Michigan

Early Childhood Family Education
Minnesota (nine locations)

Parents as First Teachers
Eureka, Missouri

STAR Parenting Program
South Toms River, New Jersey

Herricks Community Center
New Hyde Park, New York

Homemaking Consultant Program
State College, Pennsylvania

New Parents as Teachers
Memphis, Tennessee

Parent Participation Preschool
Ridgefield, Washington

Shawnee Headstart
Dunbar, West Virginia

Community Education as a Home for Family Support and Education Programs

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Executive Summary by
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Many individuals have made important contributions to this study. Chief among them were those we interviewed, who were unfailingly generous with their time and information, and patient with our follow-up inquiries. Pat Edwards, of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, was particularly helpful in our identification of sites across the U.S. We also received valuable assistance from our project officer at the C.S. Mott Foundation, Marilyn Steele; and from Lois Engstrom, the Minnesota ECFE state specialist, and Robert Gramstad, the manager of Community and Adult Education, who reviewed drafts of Chapters II and III. Finally, we appreciate the patience and professionalism of Laura Stephens-Swannie, who supervised the production of this report, and our support staff, Lori Forsyth, Tiger Lily Lee, Kristine Puopolo, and Grace Shin.

Increasingly, debates about how to prevent a variety of social problems, including abuse and neglect of children, school failure, and teen pregnancy, consider the need to provide family support and education programs to families with young children. Public policy makers and program developers who are considering these kinds of programs need to find appropriate administrative and service-delivery homes for them, both at the state and local levels. Policy makers facing decisions about location or auspices have a number of questions to consider: whether to base the initiative within a single agency or to cast it as an inter-agency effort; whether to create a new organization to provide services, or expand the mission of an existing organization (e.g., public schools, child welfare agencies, or community development agencies) to include working directly with parents to strengthen and reinforce the role of the family; what kind of funding mechanism to create; which families to serve (all, or some particular "at-risk" group); what service or configuration of services to provide (e.g., parent and child development education, mental health services, health and developmental screening, adult basic education, job training); and how the initiative will interact with existing services for children and families in the community.

In the past, analysts and policy makers have suggested that schools and public education offer the best auspices for family support and education programs or services because education is regarded as beneficial for everyone, and therefore does not stigmatize parents seeking assistance and support. In addition, parent support and education can be seen as an appropriate extension of public education to children in the pre-school years and their parents. However, those who argue that these programs belong in the schools need to recognize that school districts are complex organizations, each presenting some variation of the following organizational structure: central administration; community districts, some of which are subdivisions within the district (as with many large, urban districts) or across neighboring towns (as with rural schools); elementary, intermediate, and secondary divisions; and individual school sites. The individual schools can also be thought of as being divided into departments, programs, grades, and classrooms. Within these structures, considerable variations exist in channels of communication and authority, styles of leadership, decision making, values, mission, and priorities.

Some policy analysts have suggested that Community Education is an appropriate location for such programs within the public schools because it is a program or process grounded in the local community; it extends the notion of education beyond the K-12 limits, deeming everyone in the community a learner; and because the voluntary nature of its programming requires staff to be responsive to non-traditional educational techniques (Hobbs, 1978; Hobbs et al; 1984; Hausman and Weiss, 1988). When Congress passed the Community Schools Act in 1974, which was incorporated into the Elementary and Secondary Act as Title VIII in the 1978 Education Amendments, the federal legislation specified early childhood and family education as one of 14 program activities that ought to be part of all local Community Education programs. To our knowledge, Minnesota and California are the only two states currently to have state policies and statewide funding mechanisms that ***explicitly*** support the growth of family support and education as part of each local Community Education program. In many other states, local Community Education programs have taken the initiative to offer support and education to families with young children even in the absence of state-level mandates or financial resources.

This report explores how family support and education programs that are targeted to families with pre-school age children fit within schools, or more specifically, within Community Education. A two-part approach was used to examine this question: 1) an in-depth field study in

Minnesota of the Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) initiative, including on-site visitations to nine local programs conducted between April and June of 1988; and 2) a survey of 12 family support and education programs conducted under the auspices of Community Education in other states across the country. The research outside of Minnesota was conducted during the same time period through the use of written questionnaires, review of program documents, and in-depth telephone interviews.

Both aspects of the research addressed the question of Community Education as the "home" or context for family support and education programs, examining the benefits of such arrangements and the feasibility of such relationships on a more widespread basis. Chapter II of this report summarizes the current scope and operation of ECFE in Minnesota and highlights the factors of design, context, and management that affect local program implementation. Chapter III describes the benefits of basing the ECFE initiative within Community Education. The second half of Chapter III assesses the degree to which the findings in Minnesota may be generalized to local Community Education-based family support and education programs across the United States. Individual profiles of the 21 local sites in Minnesota and across the U.S. are included in Appendix A and B.

Highlights of the Findings in Minnesota

Minnesota is a pioneer in the development and implementation of early childhood family education programs. Legislation initially passed in 1974 that established six grant-funded pilot sites in local school districts. After a 10-year, carefully nurtured pilot phase, legislation passed in 1984 that shifted responsibility for programming to the Community and Adult Education section of the State Department of Education. A funding mechanism was established that has allowed the initiative to expand rapidly from 34 pilot sites in 29 school districts to implementation almost statewide by 1988. Key findings in Minnesota include:

- ECFE has been considered a successful initiative by state legislators, Department of Education staff, and local school people in terms of efficiency of statewide implementation, respect for local autonomy of school districts, and the large numbers of parents and children who have voluntarily chosen to participate. Factors found to have contributed to this perceived success include: the homogeneity of Minnesota's population and the state's receptivity to educational innovation; the early and enduring commitment of an influential legislator; an early administrative placement of the initiative that allowed relative bureaucratic autonomy; the overall appeal of a non-deficit model of services to parents; the strategic use of pilot sites that proved crucial to 1) developing a supportive parent constituency for ECFE from across the state, and 2) the development of a workable model of services that could be adapted by most local school districts as the initiative went statewide; the use of formative program evaluation data; the adoption of a stable funding mechanism that was easy to administer; and the existence of a qualified labor pool.

- Under the current legislation, school districts certified to offer Community Education programs ***may*** also levy for ECFE by a vote of the School Board. When the levy does not generate the maximum revenue allowable, state aid is used to make up the difference. Over 90 percent of the ECFE revenue in the nine sites examined here comes from some combination of local levy and state aid. Revenue is predictable from year to year. Generally, less than 10 percent is derived from user fees or other grants.

- The relationship between Community Education, K-12, and ECFE varies from site to site because of the historical independence of ECFE, which was fostered during the pilot phase, as well as local political and personality factors within the school district. The relationship of ECFE to CE and K-12 varies among the nine sites along two dimensions: 1) the physical location of activities; and 2) programming linkages between ECFE and K-12. Each of the nine sites use at

least some space located within former public school buildings that are now used as community centers or in K-12 classroom space during off-hours. However, the availability of financial resources, lack of space in public school buildings, and the need to reach "difficult-to-serve" parents all contribute to programs renting or using space in the community. Programming linkages range from referral and cooperation with other public school staff, to offering parent education on an itinerant basis to parents of handicapped pre-school aged children or teen parents, to joint programming in these areas.

- A strong core model of services has developed in Minnesota, even though specific services offered are a matter of local choice. In fiscal years 1987 and 1988, a majority of the nine sites studied allocated over 80 percent of their service hours to weekly (1 1/2 to two hour) parent-child classes (including sibling care).

- None of the sites offers either child-only classes or classes in which parental involvement could be characterized as token under ECFE. The sites also tend to offer few classes in which parents attend without their children. The popularity of the core model of parent-child classes is best explained by the theme heard again and again from parents and staff: "Parents start coming to ECFE for their child, but they stay for themselves."

- Overall participation rates ranged from 15 to 60 percent of the eligible families in the school district. The urban districts, with larger concentrations of special populations and larger budgets, have been able to differentiate their services for families that might be considered at-risk. Smaller programs, located in suburban and rural areas, have relied more on intensified recruitment efforts and providing services in other community settings (e.g., WIC nutrition clinics, women's shelters, common areas of apartment complexes) in order to reach a cross-section of the total population. Home visiting is being used on a limited basis; often the programs rely on other agencies such as County Social Services or Public Health to provide this service.

- Staffing patterns are similar across the local sites. In addition to having a full- or part-time director of Community Education, each site employs a coordinator with full- or part-time responsibilities for ECFE. The urban and larger suburban districts also employ lead teachers and staff members who have specialized functions such as outreach and publicity, staff training, site management, and curriculum coordination. Programs also employ a number of full- or part-time parent educators, early-childhood teachers, and educational assistants to work with parents and children. All teachers working with parents and children in ECFE programs must have appropriate licenses as teachers. Two new licensure areas have recently been approved by the Board of Teaching and become effective in 1989. Licensure is the one issue that has tempered the support of some directors of Community Education, who find it expensive and restrictive: licensure alters the traditional expectation that CE courses should be offered by anyone in the community interested and willing to do so.

- Coordinators of ECFE programs have forged various types of linkages in the community in an effort to reach a cross-section of the eligible population. The major types of linkages include 1) ***outreach*** for recruitment and referral purposes; 2) ***cooperation*** in the sharing of resources such as equipment, facilities, or staff; and 3) ***collaboration***, in which ECFE resources contribute to a jointly funded activity that can act as an organizational unit with an identity separate from each participating organization. Generally, the programs that have been most successful in reaching families that may be considered at-risk have established cooperative and collaborative linkages.

- Current ECFE legislation specifies that each school district must appoint a local advisory council whose majority is drawn from participating parents. In the nine sites visited, the

councils were found to be supportive groups that review and give advice on program policies and practices that are clearly under the administrative control of the local School Board.

- None of the nine sites has undertaken a summative evaluation of the program to assess the impact of services on participants. Local programs typically measure participant satisfaction with activities. The legislation requires that local programs submit annual reports to the State Department of Education. The SDE has routinely collected reports of participant rates by type of activity as part of an ECFE annual report and budget information as part of the Community Education annual report.

Benefits to Basing ECFE in Community Education

The benefits to basing ECFE in Community Education in Minnesota must be considered both in terms of the relationship between the state coordinator and the local programs, and the relationship between the local Community Education program and ECFE. The benefits in terms of the state-local relationship are distinct to Minnesota, and may not exist in other states. First, Community Education in Minnesota is a highly developed statewide program, operating under a local levy structure and state aid mechanism that many initiatives for particular populations, including ECFE, have built upon. Second, staff within the Community Education section of the State Department of Education have provided leadership and fostered the capacity (particularly in terms of preservice and inservice training for staff, policy development, and the development and dissemination of program materials) necessary for the initiative to grow rapidly and uniformly across the state.

At the local level, Community Education is considered the adoptive home of a 10-year-old initiative. Benefits to basing ECFE in Community Education at the local level must consider that it came to CE with a developed and well accepted core model of services. Also, the benefits must be considered from the points of view of different stakeholders: school administrators (including directors of Community Education); ECFE staff; other community agencies and programs; and parents. Common benefits that emerged across the nine sites include:

- ***Program Stability.*** ECFE services are not dependent upon grants or user fees. The public schools have not had to choose ECFE in place of something else. Financial resources are adequate to hire a full- or part-time coordinator. Staff can focus on program development and recruitment rather than fundraising. At the same time, staff remain motivated to keep their courses and services interesting and worthwhile because the program is voluntary for parents.

- ***Compatibility of Philosophy and Goals.*** ECFE programs were found to be geared to meeting the needs of the local community, while maintaining a strong tradition of being a preventive service. Community Education programs, which tend to offer services for both children and adults, easily incorporated the requirement of substantial parental involvement. Repeatedly, across all sites, parents commented that they felt it was very natural to have the program be part of Community Education. They indicated a preference for the public schools rather than an agency geared only to helping people with problems. As a program open to all parents, services tend to be geared to the largest segment of the eligible population in Minnesota: white middle-class parents.

- ***Access to a Widely Dispersed Service Delivery Network.*** Minnesota is a large state geographically with a large number of school buildings in sparsely populated areas outside of the metropolitan area. In many rural areas, the schools are the largest buildings in town. Basing ECFE in Community Education has fostered both local control by the community and the use of a network of school buildings located in neighborhoods or rural areas. The stable base of funds

permits programs the option of renting space when public school classrooms are not available or as part of an effort to reach families not drawn to participate in school-based activities.

- ***Strengthening of Local Community Education Programs.*** Minnesota has experienced an aggressive adoption of ECFE by local school districts. In just four years, ECFE has become a significant part of Community Education expenditures (ranging from 11 to 45 percent). Some School Boards interested in offering ECFE services have actually decided to initiate a Community Education program in order to be able to levy for ECFE. In some instances, these CE programs have gone on to add other services and activities.

- ***Strengthening of Existing Public School Programs.*** ECFE staff have contributed to specialized services for teen parents and parents of young children with disabilities in the public schools. The addition of parent support and education activities to special education services for pre-school aged handicapped children, in particular, highlights the difficulty of reconciling differing ideologies of services even when staff are receptive to working together: parent involved with special education is accustomed to professionals working with his/her child; services place the parent in the role of being an active participant in his/her child's development.

- ***Efficient Use of Both School and Community Resources.*** This new set of services draws from the administrative structures already available in school districts. Placement of the initiative in Community Education has allowed for easy monitoring by the State Department of Education since the funds must be maintained in an account separate from the general fund of a school district. ECFE is also able to draw resources from the schools in terms of space, although space is at a premium in all the districts visited. The stable financial base has allowed the district to charge reasonable administrative expenses (e.g., operation of a building, telephone, postage) to ECFE, thus not burdening the general administrative fund. The financial base has also allowed ECFE staff to lease space in the community from year to year.

- ***Diversity in Staffing Arrangements.*** Minnesota is in the process of recognizing a new professional area: the parent educator. The legislation that permitted ECFE to expand statewide also included the provision that staff be appropriately licensed. Most staff working as parent educators or early childhood teachers in an ECFE program do not have other responsibilities in the school district. As the new standards for licensure take effect in 1989, many ECFE staff are pushing to move their positions onto the master teacher contract in anticipation of bargaining for a comparable salary structure to teachers in the district. The current diversity in both staffing and the wage structure for staff will be limited by these structural arrangements. The funding base can support such a shift because, unlike many enrichment courses offered through Community Education, ECFE does not have to support itself solely through user fees or grants.

Generalizing the Benefits to Sites Across the U.S.

The first obvious difference arises in the relationship between the state Community Education office and the local family support and education program. The commitment to Community Education of the 12 states in which these sites are located covers an enormous range. Respondents in states with strong commitments to Community Education clearly felt that placing the family support and education program under CE benefited the program.

Unlike the Minnesota initiative, most of the local programs in the 12 states originated within the local Community Education program as an idea of the Community Education director or other Community Education staff. One must bear this difference in mind when attempting to generalize the benefits found in Minnesota to other states.

Benefits that clearly generalized to the 12 sites across the U.S. included: compatibility of philosophy and goals; strengthening of Community Education; strengthening of existing public school programs, and the efficient use of school and community resources.

Two benefits, program stability and diversity of staffing, varied because of contextual differences within each state. Specifically:

- The stability of the 12 programs ranged according to the source(s) of funding. Of the 12, the programs in states with strong state policies and the programs with a consistent, predictable source of funding from social service agencies were the most secure. Only two of the 12 sites rely on fees as their primary source of funding. Unlike the local ECFE programs in Minnesota, which can count on stable funding from year to year, several local programs outside of Minnesota reported having to shift their emphasis in order to be eligible for a new source of funds.

- Staffing patterns varied much more in the programs located across the U.S. Many, but not all, programs require some form of licensure, although that requirement is often a personal criterion of the director rather than a state or county mandate. No universal push toward licensure was evident.

Implications for Policy and Practice

While many of our findings require further investigation and analysis, our main conclusions are clear. It must be remembered that the ECFE initiative is very young as a statewide program. Many of the current program implementation issues will undoubtedly be addressed in the future, and others will emerge. The following findings suggest new directions for policy and programming, and highlight some of the complex dilemmas state policy makers and local program developers are facing in Minnesota and across the U.S.:

- Staff working in Community Education and family support and education programs must constantly work to assure their activities are appealing to parents, who voluntarily choose to enroll and participate. Parents ***will*** attend family support and education classes. Programs do not need to rely on gimmicks in order to recruit parents. But programs must pay careful attention to outreach techniques in order to reach a cross-section of eligible families and recognize that techniques vary in their effectiveness with different types of parents. Programs must expect to devote additional staff time and resources to developing cooperative and collaborative linkages to other community-based agencies that currently serve families who do not rush to participate in weekly parent-child classes.

- Parent support and education services cannot be supported by user fees alone, especially when start-up costs for equipment related to childrens' services and the need to make services available in a variety of settings is considered.

- Programs located in suburban and rural areas face particular challenges to serving families that are at-risk due to: 1) a lack of ***identifiable*** concentrations of particular types of families who live in particular areas of the community; 2) a lack of adequate, affordable models or services even if the families are identified; and 3) structural and ideological barriers to working cooperatively with other agencies in the community charged with serving these families.

- The boundary between prevention and treatment becomes blurred when the needs of the very stressed family are considered. More research is needed in this area, both to document approaches to services that are able to attract and serve such families, and to evaluate their

effectiveness. We hypothesize that the need for inter-agency collaboration increases in proportion to the magnitude of stress being experienced by these families.

- As Community Education strives to offer programming beyond enrichment classes, the needs of staff must be considered in program planning and budgeting. Staff working in family support and education programs all talked about the need for specialized training, technical assistance, and opportunities to network with other service providers in their own states in order to share best practices. Staff must have opportunities to meet on a regular basis as part of their job to discuss particular cases and to support each other in meeting the needs of families.

- Community Education-based family support and education programs have relied heavily on efficiency of program operations and on participation rates as their primary measures of success. Staff do not have the time, resources, or expertise to conduct evaluations of the effectiveness of their services. Data demonstrating program effects would be beneficial to other policy makers currently considering the adoption of state policies in this area. Further, program planners must be more aware of configurations of services that lead to positive effects for families over time. The need for external funding and technical assistance in this area is enormous.

- Programs that are particularly successful at serving families that are at-risk have a number of characteristics in common: 1) staff are adept in, and have the time to, develop strong personal networks among other agencies in the community concerned with families; 2) staff are able to identify local funding sources for activities tailored to meet the needs of at-risk families; 3) services are packaged to meet the needs of both parents and children--parent support and education, adult basic education classes, childcare, transportation, counseling, and/or vocational training; and 4) in activities directed toward parents, staff rely much more on a group process rather than on prepared curriculum materials.

- Adequate financial resources are a mixed blessing when the needs of families that are at-risk are considered. Programs with adequate resources tend to form linkages in the community in order to generate referrals and to minimize duplication of services. But these programs will also tend to develop parent support and education as a service ***distinct*** from other types of services needed by these families. On the other hand, programs that operate in the absence of state funding must become involved in cooperative and collaborative ventures with other agencies in the community in order to survive financially. These programs may lose some of their autonomy and may have to adapt their ideology and services to the agencies to which they are linked. More research and analysis is needed to identify state and local policies and practices that encourage agencies in the community to work together to establish comprehensive services of sufficient intensity and duration to meet the needs of at-risk families. Community Education might make a significant contribution by serving as the catalyst for increased cooperation and collaboration among agencies and programs concerned with families and young children.

Heather Weiss, Director
Harvard Family Research Project
November, 1988

Introduction

Family Support and Education -- History

The rubric of family support and education covers an array of programs that share a common approach to working with families, a basic set of premises. First, family support and education takes an 'ecological' approach to child development, recognizing the importance of the immediate family, the extended family, and the community to the growth and development of the young child. As a result, family support and education programs seek to improve the life of the child by helping parents provide the best possible environment for the child (Weiss, 1986). Second, family support and education, as the name implies, combines two functions that in earlier eras fell to two separate professions, social workers and educators. Family support and education programs offer a mix of social support, information, emotional support, and instrumental assistance to families with young children. Nevertheless, the family support and education approach emphasizes prevention of future problems and enhancement of existing strengths, rather than treatment, so that as a whole, the movement is closer to education than social work, and indeed, many such programs grew out of, or are located in, the public schools. A third premise of family support and education is that neither support nor education flows only in one direction from provider to parent. Instead, parents themselves provide support and education to one another. Program professionals are peers rather than experts; they "do things not ***to*** but ***with*** parents" (Weiss, 1986).

The immediate antecedent of the family support and education movement is the federal War on Poverty of the 1960s, but the philosophical stance of family support and education comes out of debates that are in fact much older. Since the colonial period, American philosophers have regarded the years of early childhood as a critical time in the moral and spiritual, if not necessarily intellectual or emotional, development of the individual (Weiss, 1979). However, since the early part of the nineteenth century, educators and theorists have debated ***where*** that education should take place, with cycles of opinion shifting between home and school. Often, opinion came down on the side of the school as part of a larger effort of social reform for the poor. These reform movements implicitly recognized the powerful influence of the family and community on the child, but their response was, "Get the child out of that environment as soon as possible."

The Infant Schools movement of the 1820s and 1830s placed enormous importance on the experiences of a child's early years. First in Great Britain and Europe, and later in cities of the northeastern United States, children of poor families, as young as eighteen months, were exposed to a program of learning and activities in Infant Schools (Gordon, 1986). The ultimate aim of the Infant Schools was the eradication of poverty "by educating and 'properly' socializing children from poor families" (May & Vinovskis, as quoted in Gordon, 1986). The Infant Schools movement died out in the 1830s, followed by "an increased emphasis on the role of the mother at home as the educator of her young children." (Spodek, as quoted in Gordon, 1986).

The next major reform in the area of early childhood was the Kindergarten Movement of the 1870s, which grew out of the work of a German philosopher who championed the value of play for young children. Initially a private, charitable endeavor, this form of education was again tied to the idea of enabling poor children "to rise above the disadvantages of poverty and neglect" (Ross, as quoted in Gordon, 1986). Unlike the Infant Schools movement, however, the Kindergarten Movement did not ignore the homes from which these children had come. Kindergarten teachers made home visits in the afternoons "to explain to the mothers what the children did in classes and

to tactfully teach the parents about nutrition, hygiene and child rearing" (Ross, as quoted in Gordon, 1986).

The settlement houses took part in the Kindergarten Movement, opening kindergartens to the children of immigrants (Gordon, 1986). This was only a part of what the settlement houses offered to families: they "conducted parent education to help immigrants isolated from traditional sources of child-rearing advice; provided practical assistance with child care, housing, legal and other problems" (Weiss and Halpern, 1988).

By the first two decades of this century, many public schools had incorporated kindergartens. For practical reasons, however, most of them operated without home visits (Gordon, 1986). In its initial, charitable form, the Kindergarten Movement did not emphasize a distinct separation of home and school, but by the time the movement became widespread, the separation was once again clear.

The Mothers' Groups of the 1880s and 1890s saw a renewed emphasis on the role of the parent in the home. One such group, which began with three mothers in 1888, grew to become the "Society for the Study of Child Nature" and later, the Child Study Association. The mothers kept journals of their own children's development, met together to discuss various philosophers, and heard lectures by experts in the field (Weiss, 1979). The National Congress of Mothers, formed in 1897, the forerunner of today's PTA, concerned itself with the mothers' "effectiveness as parents and their ability to effect change on behalf of children in their communities" (Gordon, 1986).

These self-help organizations, whose members came primarily from the middle-class, grew steadily, and by the 1920s, parent education was a national movement. Organizations "developed parenting guides and topical pamphlets, held national and local meetings to devoted to parenting, conducted training for parent educators, and brought mothers together in local groups to discuss child rearing" (Weiss and Halpern, 1988). During this period, parent education became a part of several new federal programs, including vocational education and agricultural extension services (Gordon, 1986).

Over the years as the focus of early-childhood education went back and forth between home and school, mothers repeatedly gained and lost the role of expert on their children's development. With the rise of the medical profession in the nineteenth century, knowledge about "the most basic human activities of caring for a child [was] no longer considered part of the social stock of knowledge, available to all. The tone of nineteenth-century manuals communicates quite clearly that "child-rearing knowledge was specialized knowledge over which doctors might exert expert control" (Mechling, as quoted in Weiss, 1979). The proceedings of the Iowa White House Conference on Child Health and Protection in 1932 illustrate the ongoing tension between parent and expert, by insisting that parents should not be treated "merely as instruments for rearing children in accordance with the standards and methods presented by experts and authorities" (Brim, as quoted in Weiss, 1979).

The programs of the War on Poverty returned to the idea of education as a means to eradicate poverty, and once again, the emphasis of the early childhood programs of that era -- Head Start, Title I, and Follow Through -- was primarily on school- or center-based activities for children. All three programs involved the parents to a degree; Head Start had the broadest mandate to involve parents and the community: "the child's entire family, as well as the community, must be involved in solving his problems. Every Head Start program must have effective parent participation" (Office of Child Development, as quoted in Gordon, 1986). The central focus, however, was once again on the child in school and not on the home. During this period, pre-kindergarten education was on the rise nationally. While only eleven percent of three- and four-year-olds were enrolled in nursery schools in 1965, thirty-seven percent were enrolled in 1980 (Hobbs et al., 1984).

David Gordon (1986) suggests that the 1969 Westinghouse-Ohio evaluation of Head Start, which showed only a short-term impact of the program, was the impetus for programs like the Parent-Child Development Centers, which worked directly and intensively with mothers as well as children. By "identifying parents -- and not the schools -- as the primary educators of children, the PCDC experiment represented a real turning away from earlier federal efforts" (Gordon, 1986).

The 1970s saw the rise of a grass-roots movement of family support and education that inherited not only the assumptions of the War on Poverty, but a history of debate about the relative importance of home and school, the roles of parent and professional. Programs sprang up in a variety of settings, including schools, churches, homes, hospitals, and community centers. They provided a range of services, including information about child development, parent support groups, health and developmental screening for children, transportation, and referral to other community agencies. In recent years, family support and education programs have become an element of public-policy debates about school failure, child abuse and neglect, teen pregnancy, and a number of other contemporary social problems. As policy makers around the country begin to design and implement family support and education programs at the local, state, or federal level, one issue they face is which agency or institution is the most suitable home for this new wave of programs.

Placement in the Schools

In the past, policy analysts (Hobbs, 1978; Hobbs et al., 1984; Weiss and Jacobs, 1984) have suggested that public schools offer the best auspices for family support and education programs because: programs could thus make use of an existing administrative structure and established tax base; schools have a tradition of local control; school buildings are becoming underutilized as the birth rate declines; the location would assure (or at least encourage) continuity between family support and education and K-12 programs; schools provide open access to services; and public schools offer a universal service, which the public generally regards as beneficial to everyone, so that if programs are located in the schools and take an educational approach, parents will not feel stigmatized by participating. In addition, since many such family support and education programs seek to reduce the incidence of school failure, placement of programs for the families of pre-school-age children in the schools is a logical extension of the traditional mission of the K-12 school.

These analysts have raised the issue of potential disadvantages to placement in the schools: a school setting might introduce rigidity into the curriculum and delivery of family support and education services; would add a new burden an already underfunded school system; and would place programs in a "home" that is not traditionally responsive to parents or families as a whole but rather focuses exclusively on the child. Conflict with the work of the schools, a potential hurdle for family support and education programs, arose as early as the Infant School movement of the 1820s, which met with objections from teachers in the primary grades who preferred "to receive children into the Primary Schools who have had no instruction whatever . . . " (Bigelow, as quoted in Gordon, 1986). The apparent lack of coordination between this early pre-school effort and teachers of older grades highlights an important challenge for today's family support and education programs.

Perhaps to counter some of these potential disadvantages, some analysts have further speculated that within the school system, Community Education is an appropriate location for family support and education programs (Hobbs et al., 1984; Weiss and Jacobs, 1984). "Clearly the most significant movement bringing families and schools together," writes Hobbs (1978), "is the community school idea." Placing programs for families in schools, "draws on a long tradition of schools helping people master various developmental tasks" (Hobbs et al., 1984). He writes further

that "openness to family members is one of the important purposes of the community school movement . . . ." Indeed, a study conducted by Development Associates, funded by the Mott Foundation, found that forty-three percent of Community Education programs offered special programs on family relationships (Boo and Decker, 1985).

As a movement, Community Education shares several philosophical commitments with family support and education. Writing about Community Education in 1955, Ernest Melby could well have been writing about family support and education. "Our basic questions," he writes, include: "How can the school be managed so that it not only makes its best contribution to the child's growth and development but also exercises that best possible influence upon all the other elements of the environment, which should be controlled in desirable directions for the child's greatest possible growth and development?" (Melby, as quoted in Olsen, 1988). Both movements believe that education can and ought to address more than a standardized body of knowledge, taking its focus instead from the problems and processes of human existence. Both movements believe in utilizing community resources to the benefit of all (Weiss & Jacobs, 1984). Both recognize that education is not solely the province of the professional educator.

Community Education -- History

From the beginning, Community Education has sought to redefine the mission of the schools, not merely in form, but also in content. Schools have been used for the education of adults after hours since 1810, but Community Education was not really born until the curriculum itself expanded to include what Decker calls "the major processes and problems of human living" (1972). Community Education is not simply a movement to extend the use of the schools ***in traditional ways*** -- including formal, rigid curricula and standard subject matter -- but to change the mission of the school itself. Instead, "Community Education shatters the sometimes rigid limits of traditional education to reach out and respond to the changing needs of a changing society" (Kildee, 1987). Seeking to define the subject matter of Community Education, Olsen quotes Herbert Spencer: "How to live -- that is the essential question for us. Not how to live in the material sense only, but in the widest sense . . . . In what way to treat the body; in what way to treat the mind; in what way to manage our affairs; in what way to bring up a family; in what way to behave as a citizen . . . . To prepare us for complete living is the function which education has to discharge . . ." (1972).

Scanlon traces the historical roots of Community Education not to early uses of the schools for adult education after hours, but to the Farmer's Institute of the late 1800s, which used education to address the needs of its community. "For the men, there were discussions and demonstrations of farming techniques; for the women, programs were arranged in domestic science" (Scanlon, as quoted in Decker, 1972). Boo and Decker (1985) cite historians who trace the history of Community Education to the settlement houses of the 1880s. These neighborhood settlement houses "worked to restore a sense of community and mutual support in the rapidly growing slums of the larger cities" (Weiss and Halpern, 1988). Historians have called them "models of community partnership to meet the social, educational, and economic needs of immigrants" (Boo and Decker, 1985). Boo and Decker go on to cite the historians who look for precursors of Community Education to the New Deal programs that "aimed at getting maximum good from available resources and encouraging people to work together to achieve common goals" (Boo and Decker, 1985).

One of the early practical experiments in Community Education took place during the Depression, when Elsie Clapp, a progressive educator who was close to John Dewey, participated in the creation of a new school system on a federally funded homestead for coal miners and their families in Arthurdale, West Virginia. Working with a philosophy of community decision-making, Clapp oversaw the transformation of a dilapidated mansion and two sheds into a nursery school,

elementary school, high school, and an adult school. The schools dispensed services and information on health and nutrition, as well as a becoming center for recreation and cultural life.

Clapp later defined the community school this way: "First of all, it meets as best it can, and with everyone's help, the urgent needs of the people, for it holds that everything that affects the welfare of the children and their families is its concern. Where does the school end and the outside begin? There is no distinction between them. A community school is a used place, a place used freely and informally for all the needs of living and learning. It is, in effect, the place where living and learning converge" (Clapp, as quoted in Decker, 1972). Clapp's philosophy accords well with the approach of many family support and education programs, which take "everything that affects the welfare of the children and their families" as their concern, and attempt to address these needs either directly, or through information and referral.

The critical link between the philosophy and isolated practical experiments of the early twentieth century and Community Education in its present form is the partnership between Frank Manley, a director of physical education in Flint, Michigan, and Charles Stewart Mott, an industrialist, who met during the Depression. Manley wanted to combat juvenile delinquency by using school facilities for after-hours recreation. Mott supported his idea financially. Over time, the after-school activities evolved into comprehensive educational offerings for all members of the Flint community, including literacy classes and high-school completion programs. The enduring support of the Mott Foundation, established by Charles Stewart Mott, allowed the Flint Community Schools to develop in scope and complexity, becoming a model for educators around the world.

Community Education's period of most rapid growth took place between 1965 and 1980, paralleling the rise of the grass-roots family support and education movement. By 1977, more than 1,000 school districts in the country were operating a Community Education program, with the help of over 100 regional Centers for Community Education, supported by the Mott Foundation. That period also saw the birth of a national association and many state associations, with their attendant journals, newsletters, training services, and conferences.

State-level funding for Community Education began in Michigan in 1969. By 1986, ten states appropriated funds for local Community Education services; another ten supported Community Education staff at the state level (Westbrook, 1986). In 1974, the United States Congress passed the Community Schools Act, and augmented that effort in 1978 with the Comprehensive Community Education Act. Throughout this period, Community Educators joined the staffs of state and federal education agencies, and the faculties of many universities and colleges.

Minzey (1981) attributes this growth spurt to several factors. The 1960s brought a renewed interest in 'people power,' or participatory democracy, which may have found an outlet in the central role of citizen involvement in Community Education. Community Education may also have responded to a desire to return to life on a smaller scale, where members of a community share concerns and values. People spoke of reclaiming the schools from a dense, impersonal bureaucracy and turning them once again to the needs, not only of the children, but of the whole community.

Currently, Community Educators are exploring and developing relationships with other institutions to address the pressing concerns of the community, which in recent years have focused on community economic development and the related issues of literacy, child care, school readiness, dropout prevention, and job retraining. The position of Community Education, at the juncture of the school and the community, makes it a natural leader in all of these areas, not simply by providing programs and services, but in building bridges among social agencies, hospitals, businesses, religious institutions, and the whole range of citizens who are committed to addressing these important concerns.

Scope of the Current Study

Policy analysts have suggested that placing a family support and education program in Community Education has advantages for both parties. They hypothesize that the family support and education program benefits because Community Education: is grounded in the local community; extends the concept of education beyond the limits of K-12 to include everyone in the community as a learner; does not operate within the constraints of elementary and secondary education, which include rigid hours that may be inconvenient for parents, and inflexible salary and benefits packages; and understands how to attract and interact with adult learners; and is skilled in responsive, non-traditional educational techniques.

In turn, the argument continues, Community Education benefits from the arrangement because family support and education programs: strengthen Community Education offerings; broaden the range of people Community Education serves; and enhance the community's perception of Community Education programs as providing a vital, rather than peripheral service by promoting the healthy development of children and families in the community.

In the past, analysts have discussed the advantages and disadvantages of placing family support and education programs within Community Education without a systematic examination of how such programs work within Community Education. The purpose of this study was to undertake such an examination, considering the question from two perspectives:

1. An in-depth field study of Minnesota's Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) program, a statewide family support and education program that has operated under Community Education at the state and local levels since 1984.

While the ECFE program is universal, several of the ECFE programs also target specific groups, thus addressing an issue that has arisen more than once in the history of early-childhood interventions. For example, as kindergartens, which began as an intervention for the children of the poor, became a part of the public schools, their supporters wanted to expand the domain of kindergartens to include middle-class and upper-class children as well: "if the kindergarten had educational and moral validity, it should be available to ***all*** children, rich and poor together" (Ross, as quoted in Gordon, 1986). The tension between serving only a particularly needy group and opening up a program to all families continues to exist in the family support and education movement.

2. An analysis of twelve family support and education programs operating under the auspices of Community Education in other states around the country, in order to determine whether the benefits to the placement in Community Education that surfaced in Minnesota would generalize to programs in other states.

One particular focus of this portion of the study was linkage to other agencies, particularly when the families had multiple problems or stresses in their lives. Using schools for information and referral has been a thread running through Community Education. Community Education also has a history of working with other community resources to solve local problems. "The community school is but one of many agencies, independently attacking some problems, serving as a coordinating agency in other situations, and participating as a team member in still other circumstances" (Hanna and Nashlund, cited in Decker, 1972). Seay (1972) refers to the Sloan experiment in Kentucky, whose lessons included "using the services of various community agencies" as an important antecedent of Community Education. This tradition of linkage seemed particularly appropriate for family support and education programs that attempt to serve families with multiple needs.

The Minnesota Experience

Minnesota has been a pioneer in the development and implementation of early childhood family education programs. In 1974, initial legislation passed that established six grant-funded pilot projects in local school districts. In 1984, legislation shifted responsibility for programming to Community Education, establishing a stable funding mechanism that has allowed the initiative to expand rapidly from 34 pilot projects in 29 school districts to implementation almost statewide by 1988.

While each of the nine ECFE programs visited in Minnesota had unique features (refer to Appendix A for a profile of each site), they shared some common issues of design and management. This chapter synthesizes the findings and lessons that cut across the nine programs. The first objective is to summarize the current scope and operation of these ECFE programs. A second objective is to highlight the factors of design, context, and management that affect local ECFE program implementation. The following chapter will describe the benefits of basing the initiative within Community Education.

The Scope and Operation of ECFE

The central purpose of ECFE has always been to enhance and support the competence of parents to provide the best possible environment for the healthy growth of their children during the formative years between birth and kindergarten enrollment (Kurz-Riemer, 1985). ECFE starts from the premise that the home is the first learning environment, and that the parent is a child's primary and most influential teacher.

Major goals of ECFE, as articulated by the Minnesota Department of Education, are to:

- support parents in their efforts in raising children;
- offer child-development information and alternative parenting techniques;
- foster effective communication between parents and their children;
- supplement the discovery and learning experiences of children; and
- promote positive parental attitudes throughout the child's school years.

The current ECFE legislation defines the scope and operation of the program in terms of auspices, program characteristics, parental involvement, funding, linkage and coordination, district advisory councils, and staffing. A copy of the provisions of the legislation is included in Appendix C. The following sections examine how each of these provisions have been implemented across the state. Where relevant, examples will be cited from the nine case study sites to illuminate the findings.

Auspices

Between the years 1975 and 1983, pilot programs in local school districts were administered through the Council on Quality Education (CQE), a fairly autonomous unit in the State Department of Education (SDE). In 1984, Community and Adult Education assumed full responsibility for ECFE under the SDE. Local school districts that were certified to offer Community Education became eligible to levy for and offer ECFE.

The expansion of ECFE services across the state since 1984 has been phenomenal. In fiscal year 1986, 253 out of 435 school districts in Minnesota offered ECFE services. By fiscal year 1988, approximately 380 school districts were certified to offer Community Education; of those, 310 chose to offer ECFE. A report to the Legislature in March of 1986 stated that 41 percent of the districts offering an ECFE program indicated involvement in a cooperative arrangement with neighboring districts in order to share the costs of program supervision, staff or other resources. Appendix C includes a time line that traces the history and growth of Community Education and ECFE in Minnesota and a chart depicting the current administrative structure for ECFE at the state and local levels.

Within the sites, the relationships between ECFE, Community Education and the K-12 public school program are, in fact, much more complex than may be depicted on an organizational chart. At one extreme, the ECFE programs in Duluth and the Freshwater Cooperative receive funding through a Community Education levy, but have no reporting relationship to the directors of Community Education in the administration and supervision of the program. In Duluth, the coordinator of ECFE reports to the director of elementary education. The ECFE coordinator for the Freshwater Cooperative reports to the director of special education for the cooperative. At the other extreme, the ECFE coordinators in Minneapolis and Burnsville have particularly strong reporting relationships under Community Education in the district and must assure that program policies and practices conform to those of Community Education (e.g., employment of staff, minimum enrollment in activities, ideology regarding community involvement, or use of district resources). The reporting relationships in the remaining five sites studied place ECFE under Community Education, but day-to-day relationships may be best characterized as collegial. ECFE coordinators must assure that their programs conform to district policies, but Community Education affords them tremendous latitude in crafting their programs.

This range in relationships between ECFE and Community Education could not be traced to common factors across sites other than the historical independence of ECFE. Rather, historical and political factors within a district, as well as personality factors of the major players, all contribute to ECFE's relationship to Community Education.

The relationship of ECFE to the K-12 program in a district also varies widely. Overall, ECFE coordinators at the nine sites feel that school district personnel are supportive and somewhat interested in the initiative, but unfamiliar with the details of the program. From the outside looking in, school district personnel are generally supportive of the initiative, but view it primarily as a program for middle-class families.

The administrative placement of the program within Community Education, the categorical nature of the funding, and the fact that parents are considered the primary recipients of services, all contribute to ECFE developing as a set of add-on activities that are considered secondary to the primary mission of the public schools: to educate youngsters. The relationship of ECFE to K-12 across the nine sites takes the following forms:

Operating outside the public schools. Almost all of the nine ECFE programs find it necessary to rent physical space located in community-based facilities. First, adequate space within public school buildings is at a premium, especially during the regular school day when required kindergarten and special education classes are held for young children. Space is just not available in many public schools to dedicate to ECFE activities. Second, both ECFE activities for children (when their parents are in a separate class) and parent-child activities have historically developed in "dedicated space," which is carefully designed for the young child -- although frequently outfitted with a specially constructed loft space, not a single full-size chair is evident in most of these rooms! Such an arrangement continues to be a strong, commonly held value of ECFE staff. Third, in order

to enhance participation of "difficult-to-reach" parents, ECFE programming is often located in settings considered more physically accessible to these families. Finally, the size of the programs necessitates extensive space. A stable source of funds that is assured from year to year permits districts to lease square footage at commercial rates when school space is not readily available.

Co-existence within the public schools. Each of the nine sites use at least some space located within former public school buildings or currently operating K-12 programs (refer to Appendix D). This use ranges from having rooms set aside specifically within elementary school buildings and/or Community Education centers, to sharing space with kindergartens, early childhood special education, or latch-key programs operated through Community Education during off-hours. The opportunities for use of public school space are enhanced when the ECFE coordinator also has responsibilities within the K-12 program. In the Freshwater Cooperative, the ECFE coordinator's responsibilities in early childhood special education facilitate the joint use of space, but without other overlap or merging of programming. The rural character of some of the outlying communities served through the ECFE programs of Freshwater Cooperative, Grand Rapids, and Mankato also makes it necessary to utilize public school space because of a lack of other public spaces in town.

A programming linkage. ECFE is becoming more a part of the public schools as it engages in the following activities:

- referring young children to early childhood special education (ECSE) for assessment, and accommodating referrals from ECSE for participation of young disabled children and their parents in ECFE activities;
- offering pre-kindergarten orientation information as part of ECFE activities;
- offering parent education instruction on an itinerant basis to teen parents or in alternative high school settings;
- offering parent education classes targeted to parents of developmentally delayed young children; and
- participating in meetings with kindergarten staff to discuss common concerns (generally sporadic, but the frequency is increasing).

Collaborative programming. Evidence of joint programming in which ECFE and other school units merge resources to offer unified early childhood special education or programs for teen parents is rare across the nine sites, but growing in frequency, especially in the urban school districts. The merging of ECFE and classroom-based services for 3- to 5-year olds in Minneapolis illustrates the difficulties of reconciling two different ideologies of parental involvement and the different expectations that parents themselves have about their role in the education of their children. On the other hand, a new mandate for school districts to serve 0- to 3-year-old children with developmental disabilities was a serendipitous opportunity for ECFE in Duluth and Minneapolis to work with their special education departments from the beginning of the initiative to forge a common ideology, work out differing programming standards (e.g., licensure of staff), and provide staff jointly for this initiative.

A common ideology of parent education and child development activities is apparent across all sites. Parent educators all espoused the following themes in their interactions with parents, which also appear in written statements of program philosophy:

- respect for the ability of parents to judge their own needs and to know what they want to learn;

- trust in the ability of parents to take responsibility and make good choices for their own families;
- acceptance of "where parents are coming from" at that particular time; and
- a belief that there are many good ways to raise children and that parents need to find their own way, based on their own values, life styles, and the personalities of the parents and children.

The specific services a program offers are a matter of local choice, which allows programs the flexibility to match program activities with the needs of the local community. In fiscal years 1987 and 1988, a majority of the nine sites allocated over 80 percent of their service hours to parent-child classes (including sibling care at four sites). The typical annual involvement of a family in this core model of services is one-and-a-half to two hours a week for a period ranging from eight weeks to a school year. In order to accommodate the schedules of parents, classes are offered during evening hours, as well as during the day. Parent education and child-development sessions are usually scheduled concurrently, beginning or ending with parent-child interaction times. Typically, no more than 10 or 15 adults are enrolled in a particular class.

This core model varies among sites, and sometimes within a particular site, in the following ways:

- sessions scheduled by age group versus scheduled for mixed ages of children;
- parents being able to bring all their pre-school age children to a session versus being limited to one child;
- availability of sibling care for children not specifically enrolled in an activity with their parent(s);
- sessions being targeted to certain types of parents (e.g., fathers, single parents, teen parents, Southeast Asian immigrants) and their children; and
- the degree of structure in the parenting class.

Activities for children alone or during parent-child interaction periods take place in environments carefully organized by the early childhood staff as a series of play or activity areas. Programs favor developmentally appropriate play activities over activities that stress the completion of a project or product.

The remaining types of services provided in the nine sites include: special events; access to toys and books; newsletters; home visits for outreach and/or education; and specialized services for particular populations. A breakdown of the number of service hours devoted to each major activity is included in Appendix D.

Everyone with children from birth to kindergarten enrollment residing in the service area of the school district is eligible to participate in ECFE. Participation is voluntary. Services are directed at expectant parents, as well as grandparents, foster parents, siblings and others who have substantial involvement and responsibility for children under the age of five. The program is not only for "income-eligible" families. Program staff are encouraged by the ECFE specialist at the SDE and through resource publications to ". . . obtain an approximate pro rata participation of cultural, ethnic, and income groups represented in the community." In a 1986 report to the Legislature, the ECFE state specialist noted, "Great strides are being made by a growing number of local programs, but statewide, minority and disadvantaged families are still seriously under-represented in the program" (SDE, 1986, p. 22). The state specialist reports that "the situation has improved significantly in the last two years due to a major emphasis on outreach."

Data regarding the number of eligible young children and their families who are minorities was not available to compare to the participation rates reported by each site (refer to Appendix D).

If the proportion of ECFE participants who are minorities is compared to the proportion of minority K-12 students, the underrepresentation of these families in ECFE is apparent across all nine sites. The gap is proportionately the greatest in the suburban and rural sites. The urban districts do a better job of meeting the challenge of increasing enrollments of a population which is much more diverse, and not necessarily drawn to participate in the core model of services. The suburban and rural sites are reaching larger proportions of the total population, but clearly not appealing to the ***much*** smaller concentrations of minority families within their service areas. Information regarding participation of families who are experiencing stress due to other factors was not available. It is therefore difficult to access the degree ECFE appeals to families with these characteristics.

The nine sites all utilized numerous methods to recruit eligible families for participation, including the distribution and mailing of brochures, newsletters, open houses, public service announcements, and even door-to-door canvassing. The most successful approach reported, however, is "word of mouth" among participants.

The average rates of participation have tended to be higher in the more established, rural sites (Mankato and the Freshwater Cooperative reported 33 to 36 percent in 1986-87, increasing to 37 and 60 percent respectively in 1987-88), although a majority of the urban and suburban sites are continuing to show increases each year (refer to Appendix D). Increases in participation have been much slower in St. Paul and Burnsville, and actually decreased in Bloomington/Richfield for different reasons. St. Paul's future growth is constrained because the district is already levying the maximum allowable under the current legislation and a substantial part of its budget is locked into a strong neighborhood model of services, employing many instructional staff on a full-time basis and a full range of support staff (e.g., program coordinators; and curriculum, inservice, evaluation and outreach specialists). Likewise, Bloomington/Richfield is levying to the maximum and is locked into a popular model of services based at a community center in which one of the districts charges rent to the ECFE budget. In addition, Bloomington/Richfield decreased the number of special events, which usually attract large numbers of participants and therefore inflate the participation rates reported to the SDE. Burnsville has experienced an annual turnover of ECFE coordinators and is really just beginning to attract participants into parent-child classes.

The urban districts, with the larger concentrations of special populations and larger budgets, have been able to differentiate their services for particular populations in an effort to meet the mandate of being a universal program. Examples include:

- intensive family-school experiences for stressed parents and their young children, offered independently in Duluth and in collaboration with a city hospital in Minneapolis;
- comprehensive services for teen parents operated in cooperation with other school subunits in Duluth and Minneapolis that include transportation, a range of educational and/or vocational training options offered within the high school or in alternative school settings, child care, and parent support and education;
- adult basic education courses through Community Education that offer free child care if a parent enrolls in a targeted or regular ECFE class, in Bloomington and Richfield; and
- downtown work and family centers that offer parent education classes to working parents during their lunch hours, in St. Paul and Minneapolis.

To reach parents who are not drawn to the standard core model of services, a majority of the smaller sites, located in suburban and rural areas, rely on intensified recruitment and providing services in other community settings (e.g., a women's shelter or WIC center) on an itinerant basis. These sites are having mixed success at meeting the needs of difficult-to-reach parents because they do not have the population densities, and lack workable models of service to draw upon.

Mankato's parent-to-parent home visiting service is a valiant attempt to meet the needs of stressed parents, but highlights the difficulty of maintaining ongoing services to these families.

The challenge of serving all families under a model of services that is meant to be supportive, non-deficit, and empowering is most apparent when the needs of very stressed parents are considered. The boundaries between the need for preventative versus treatment services becomes blurred. The magnitude of the issues these families face -- abuse and neglect, psychiatric disturbance, substance abuse, near illiteracy and unemployment, linguistic and cultural differences -- points to the need for staff to be knowledgeable of, and to coordinate and collaborate with other community agencies. Public health and social service personnel across the state were uniformly supportive of the initiative; many of these staff participate themselves as parents. They all acknowledge that the standard center-based services are too high level and therefore not meaningful for their most stressed clients. Parents who become involved in center-based ECFE activities because it is part of their service plan to retain custody of their children may attend the sessions, but it is unclear what they gain from the experience. Even varying the intensity of services and targeting sessions to stressed families, as demonstrated by the family school component of the Duluth services, has its limits because it is not part of a more comprehensive set of support mechanisms and services that families choose to interact with on a long-term basis. Family support certainly will not hurt the health of a family, but it cannot not be considered a substitute for diagnostic and treatment services.

Parental Involvement

The current legislation requires ***substantial*** parental involvement and specifies that parents must be physically present much of the time in classes with their children or be in concurrent classes. Activities such as parent conferences, newsletters, or notes to parents do not qualify as a program under ECFE.

It is significant that none of the nine ECFE programs offered child-only classes or classes in which parental involvement could be characterized as token. Also, the sites tended to offer few classes in which parents attended without their children. The popularity of the core model of parent-child classes is best explained by the theme heard from parents and staff: "Parents start coming to ECFE for their child, but they stay for themselves." Many sites offer special events (e.g., gym nights, special trips) that are very popular with families and are used as a recruitment tactic. Only one suburban site, District 191, included ongoing activity-oriented sessions of high interest to children (e.g., gym and swimming, cooking) in its array of ECFE offerings, but even these classes required parents to participate with their children. Also, because this district, more than others, relies on fees to support ECFE activities, with minimum enrollment quotas for a course to run, staff are more market-driven in the planning of their program.

Funding

The 1984 legislation established a stable funding base for ECFE in which school districts certified to offer Community Education programs could also levy for ECFE by a vote of the school board. Maximum revenue was defined as five percent of the foundation aid allowance (per pupil unit formula for funding K-12 programs under Minnesota's school finance scheme) times the number of children under five years of age residing in the district, or a minimum of 150. As with foundation aid generally, the maximum revenue is a combination of local levy and state aid, with districts being authorized to levy up to .4 mill in 1984, but no more than the maximum revenue as described above. In 1985, the Legislature increased the levy to .5 mill. When a .5 mill levy does

not generate the maximum revenue, state aid makes up the difference. State aid is prorated for districts choosing to levy less than .5 mill.

Between fiscal years 1984 and 1988, funding for ECFE programs under Community and Adult Education has grown from a total appropriation of approximately $1.03 million to $18.3 million (excluding revenue that local districts may have received from other sources, including state vocational-technical aid, Community and Adult Education, fees, federal grants, or foundation funds). A detailed breakdown of statewide funding between 1975 and 1988 appears in Appendix D.

Overall, ECFE funds continue to be a very small part of the total operating revenue for school districts. Each year, the total ECFE revenue derived from local levies and state categorical aid has been less than one percent (it has grown from an estimated .56 to .67 percent between 1986 and 1988) of the total state and local operating revenue available to districts (approximately $2.7 billion in FY 1988, excluding capital funding). Because Minnesota's foundation aid formula is "equalized," the ratio of aid to levy varies greatly among districts. Statewide, 40 percent of ECFE funding is state aid; 60 percent local levy. Some ECFE programs receive 100 percent of their funds from local levy.

A review of the total state categorical aid to school districts for various types of Community and Adult Education programming shows that ECFE's proportionate share will have grown to 49.1 percent by 1989 (refer to Appendix D). In some districts, ECFE is the major item in the Community Education budget.

A feeling of financial stability is evident across the nine sites. The individual funding patterns look much like that of the state as a whole (refer to Appendix D). Over 90 percent of ECFE revenue in the nine sites comes from some combination of local levy and state aid (including vocational aid). The remaining proportion of revenue (less than 10 percent) is derived from fees or other grants. The issue for Community Education directors and ECFE coordinators is Minnesota has not been how to obtain adequate resources from year to year; rather it has been how to spend them effectively.

All but three of the nine districts are levying at the maximum the legislation allows. A number of these districts are beginning to feel constrained as they become committed to particular types of services and staffing configurations that do not leave them with the resources necessary for expansion, even if the demand for services exists. St. Paul, Bloomington/Richfield, and Duluth have experienced particularly rapid expansion; demand for services within their more middle-class neighborhoods has exceeded the available classes. These districts are beginning to examine ways of expanding their services within their current budgets. St. Paul has established a minimum enrollment quota in order to maximize vocational state aid, which is based on participation hours in classes staffed by licensed vocational parent educators. Duluth is beginning to explore relationships with community agencies to underwrite the cost of specialized services for stressed families. Bloomington/Richfield has decreased the number of special events offered in favor of adding parent and child classes. Clearly, the challenge of reaching the difficult-to-serve families will be further complicated in these sites due to resource constraints.

Linkage and Coordination

Legislation for the ECFE programs explicitly encourages local districts to serve as catalysts for coordination of services among community agencies, and not to duplicate services already available in the community. Coordinators of ECFE programs have forged various types of linkages

that have contributed to the overall success of their programs. The roles that staff in the nine ECFE programs play may be characterized as examples of *outreach*; *cooperation*; or, *collaboration*, in which ECFE resources contribute to a jointly funded activity that can act as an organizational entity with an identity separate from the participating organizations. Each type of linkage will be described and discussed below.

Outreach. In this arrangement, no formal linkage exists between ECFE and other professionals and agencies in the community beyond participation on advisory councils or boards; the flow of resources is in the form of participant referrals and information about particular service needs in the community. This type of linkage takes many forms, including:

- making information about ECFE services available to other professionals and agencies in the community who serve young children and their parents;
- encouraging referrals from these professionals and agencies for enrollment in existing ECFE services;
- referral of ECFE participants to other services in the community; and
- inviting professionals and agencies to participate in assessing the needs of the community and planning the services offered by ECFE.

Cooperation. The linkage takes the form of shared resources such as facilities, equipment, or staff. Examples include:

- ECFE activities held in settings under the auspices of community-based agencies or organizations, either to reach certain types of parents or because space is not available within the public schools (rent may or may not be charged to the ECFE program);
- targeting and modifying the core model of services for particular types of parents at the request of professionals and agencies;
- ECFE staff providing parent support and education services on an itinerant basis to parents enrolled or participating in a program offered under the auspices of another agency or organization (the staff person's salary may or may not be subsidized by the agency or organization);
- another agency or organization arranging or subsidizing transportation to ECFE activities;
- an agency or organization conducting home visits for outreach and providing short-term parent support and education with the goal of the parent eventually enrolling in an ECFE sponsored activity; and
- two-way involvement in inservice and consultation.

State-level staff (first at CQE, and later, the ECFE state specialist) have actively encouraged local programs to cooperate with local nonprofit agencies and organizations to plan their services, solicit referrals, use community agencies as referral sources, and share facilities and resources. Both the lack of adequate school-based facilities and the need to reach at-risk families who do not typically look to the public schools for services have influenced ECFE programs to cooperate with other organizations.

Collaboration. This type of linkage is perhaps the most difficult and time-consuming to develop and maintain because it involves joint goals, decisions, and action. It also typically requires the commitment of staff and financial resources by each participating organization. Voluntary collaboration between ECFE and other organizations and agencies goes beyond the intent of the original legislation, and appears to have developed in response to the needs of the most stressed or at-risk families. Typically, collaboration takes place in urban or larger suburban settings that have 1) concentrations of these types of families, 2) larger ECFE budgets that may not be totally allocated to on-going services, and 3) an ideology of Community Education that goes beyond using school facilities as centers for community activities. These program components incorporate the

ideology of parent support and education into family treatment, early intervention, or adult basic education settings. Examples include:

- the merging of ECFE staff and resources with medical and therapeutic staff in an out-patient treatment program for dysfunctional families that provides for diagnostic and after-care services; and
- a three-year demonstration project involving an operating community foundation, county social services, public health, and the St. Paul ECFE program to provide a neighborhood team approach to primary prevention of child maltreatment and promotion of family strengths in at-risk families. The initiative is funded primarily with federal monies and utilizes trained community-based volunteers in conjunction with existing professional services.

District Advisory Councils

The current legislation specifies that the district must appoint local advisory councils for each program. A majority of members must be participating parents. The SDE developed and disseminated a program development guide that suggests that professionals from fields such as health, welfare, child care, and education fill the remaining positions. In a survey conducted in late 1985, local ECFE coordinators reported that the major functions of advisory councils included (in order of frequency of reporting): 1) serving as eyes and ears for the program in the community; 2) assisting in outreach; 3) monitoring the program; 4) conducting public relations efforts; 5) planning the program; and 6) helping to coordinate program services with other community resources (Minnesota State Department of Education, 1986).

The prevailing role of the advisory council solidified during the pilot years into concentrating on helping staff provide parent education services that are ". . .distinctly suited to the local clientele rather than in making administrative decisions" (CQE, 1979, p. 16). During the pilot years, CQE considered the Head-Start model for parent involvement in program governance (e.g., hiring of staff and budget related decisions), but clearly rejected it in favor of recommending that parents be involved in determining the content of the program.

Each of the nine programs visited in Minnesota has a district-wide advisory council that meets monthly to bimonthly; 50 to over 90 percent of the members are parents. The urban districts have task forces or regional advisory councils for each major program component or site. In all cases, the advisory councils are supportive groups that review and advise on program policies and practices that are clearly under the administrative control of the school district.

Staffing

Staffing patterns are similar across the nine local sites, which may be traced to the core model of services and staffing positions that evolved during the pilot phase. Each of the nine sites employs a coordinator with full- or part-time responsibilities for ECFE. The urban and larger suburban districts also employ lead teachers and staff members who have specialized functions such as outreach and publicity, staff training, site management, and curriculum coordination. In smaller programs these functions, if carried out at all, fall to the coordinator. Generally, programs employ a number of full- or part-time parent educators, early-childhood teachers, and educational assistants to work with parents and children. Few staff members work during the summer months, when programming is minimal.

Staff backgrounds vary, but primarily include early childhood educators, child development and family life specialists, nurses, and consumer home economists. All teachers working with

parents and children in ECFE programs must be appropriately licensed as vocational parent educators or as pre-kindergarten, nursery school, early childhood-special education teachers. During a five-year (1984-89) transition period, K-6, or 1-6 licensure was accepted by the SDE. In July of 1989, parent educators will need to have either a full-time adult vocational parent educator license through the vocational-technical board, or a parent educator or early childhood family educator license through the SDE. All early childhood teachers will need to be licensed by the SDE either as a nursery school teacher, pre-K teacher, early childhood special education teacher, or early childhood family education teacher.

Licensing is the one issue that has tempered the support of some directors of Community Education. First, some directors feel that the licensing requirement runs counter to the notion that Community Education courses should be offered by anyone in the community interested and willing to do so. Second, requiring licensed teachers is a potentially expensive proposition and will lead to involvement with teachers' unions. Also, many ECFE coordinators feel that licensure may preclude the hiring of minority individuals as teachers because many of their staff who are minorities do not currently meet licensure requirements. Recently, a strategy has been worked out to permit the use of staff with special backgrounds as consultants.

Salary levels for coordinators, early childhood teachers, and parent educators varies widely across the sites (refer to Appendix D). Generally, many programs pay part-time staff by the hour, including time for preparation. Many sites also pay for the time that part-time staff spend in meetings and inservice. With licensing has come the push by many ECFE staff for these positions to become part of the teacher bargaining units in an effort to 1) gain recognition as a profession, and 2) move the positions onto the teacher salary structure of the district.

Reporting and Evaluation

Local programs typically measure participant satisfaction with activities. The legislation requires programs to submit annual reports to the SDE. The SDE routinely collects reports of participant rates by type of activity as part of an ECFE annual report and budget information as part of the Community Education annual report. None of the nine sites has undertaken a summative evaluation to assess the impact of services on participants. A few of the sites have done extensive analysis of the demographic characteristics of participants as compared to the eligible population as a whole and are attempting to use these measures to define success of the program at reaching a respresentative cross-section of families in their community.

According to the current Chairman of the Senate Education Committee, the Legislature would like to have a professional study of the effectiveness of ECFE, but ". . . the best thing that sells it is constituent reports . . . . When legislators hear constituents say that ECFE has an impact, that carries more weight." Lack of funding from the Legislature for evaluation has limited efforts to look at the impact of the program since it went statewide. The state ECFE consultant has worked with an evaluation task force to develop a demographic data-collection form and a statewide participant-tracking form for use in all local programs with the intent of conducting longitudinal studies in the future when funding becomes available. During fiscal year 1988, an extensive survey was done through the SDE to get a better picture of how local programs are operating across the state.

Reasons For The Success of the State Initiative

To decide whether a program is successful, one can look at the perceived effectiveness of the organizational structures at providing services that are efficient, equitable, and satisfying to

participants. One can also ask whether the services and activities are of high quality. Finally, one can judge the efficacy of the initiative in terms of its long-range effectiveness in promoting desired outcomes for students and their families.

To date, educators at the state and local levels have perceived the Minnesota initiative as successful in providing family support and education services in an efficient manner on a statewide basis, while at the same time respecting the local autonomy of school districts by allowing them to make the decision to initiate ECFE services through their local Community Education program. In addition, educators consider these services and activities successful because of the very rapid statewide expansion of the ECFE program that occurred between 1984 and 1988, after a carefully nurtured pilot phase that had lasted 10 years. Finally, the impressive numbers of parents and children who have voluntarily enrolled in activities, and their relative satisfaction with their experience, have contributed to a perception, widely held at both the state and local levels, that the program is worthwhile.

The perceived success of the initiative may be traced to the following factors of context, program design, and management:

- Minnesota's relatively homogenous population and receptivity to educational innovations;
- an influential legislator's early and enduring commitment to Community Education and to the idea of family support and education;
- the early administrative placement of the initiative in CQE;
- the role of pilot sites in the development of a workable model of services;
- the use of evaluation data;
- the appeal of a non-deficit model of services to parents and professionals;
- the adoption of a funding mechanism that is easy to administer, allows for a stable source of funds from year to year, and maximizes local control/autonomy;
- the existence of a qualified labor pool to meet the demand for staff as local programs grew rapidly; and
- the use of Community Education as a delivery system.

The following subsections discuss the first eight factors and cite examples, where relevant, to substantiate each one. The following chapter will discuss the benefits of Community Education as a home for ECFE programs.

The Homogeneity of Minnesota's Population

In Minnesota, minorities make up 4.8 percent (200,000) of the state population (4.2 million) while in the U.S. as a whole, blacks and other minorities make up 15.5 percent of the population.

The white population in Minnesota is extraordinarily homogeneous: most whites are of Scandinavian, German, or Anglo-Saxon background. Approximately 54.2 percent of Minnesotans can trace their entire ancestry to a single group (Minnesota Legislative Manual, p. 10). The single most significant distinguishing social characteristic among whites is probably their Christian domination, which is principally either Lutheran or Roman Catholic.

Current data about minorities' socio-economic conditions in Minnesota are quite scarce. According to the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, "officials say they cannot produce solid estimates of minority family income, poverty, unemployment, and educational attainment. The most recent figures were gathered in the 1980 census before the economic upheaval caused by the recession" (Smith & von Sternberg, 1988). According to some estimates, minority children in Minnesota are

three times more likely than white children to be poor. Nevertheless, perhaps due to the small proportion of minorities in the state, Minnesota has a much lower rate of children in poverty than the nation as a whole. According to the 1980 census, 10.2 percent of Minnesota children lived in poverty, compared to 16.0 percent in the United States as a whole. Only two states, New Hampshire and Wyoming, had lower proportions; the populations of both are also quite homogeneous. In 1985, the proportion of children living in poverty in Minnesota was 13 percent.

This is not to say that Minnesota is without its complex social and economic issues. Minnesota has a significant Native American community on rural reservations that the educational and social welfare systems have failed to serve adequately. Currently, Minnesota is faced with two additional issues: much of the poverty in the state is scattered in northern rural counties rather than concentrated in the inner-city ghettos; at the same time, the state's fastest growing minority is the Southeast Asian refugees who are settling in the urban twin cities area.

A State Receptive to Public Spending and Educational Innovation

"A big-spending government is part of Minnesota's identity. From the beginning this has always been a progressive state, one where the wealth would be shared, even if that meant high taxes for the rich" wrote the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* earlier this year. Although the composition of the Democratic Farmer Labor Party, as it is now known, has changed to include many well-educated middle- and upper-income professionals, the thrust of its policies have changed little. "Minnesota's political leaders have never hesitated to reach for the pocketbook in response to perceived problems" (Smith & von Sternberg, 1988). Most important, citizens are willing to pay for education through high income taxes that equalize the financing for education across rich and poor districts by using state monies to offset local education costs. A 1985 survey (Craig, 1985) reported that 78 percent of Minnesotans were willing to forego a portion of a promised cut in taxes if the money went toward public school improvement.

Minnesota spends $2.7 billion (excluding capital expenditures) to educate more than 700,000 students in the K-12 system: over $700 per resident and over $4,000 per student. Minnesota ranks fifth in the U.S. in public school spending per state resident and 16th in spending per pupil. The lower per pupil standing can be attributed partly to Minnesota's low drop-out rate which, at 9 percent, is one of the lowest in the country, and dilutes the calculation.

Minnesota has a history of offering parent education as part of many types of programs, including vocational education (Cooke & Thomas, 1985). Vocational educators have assembled and developed many types of curriculum materials that ECFE staff have been able to draw upon. Coupled with Minnesota's enduring commitment to public education, the belief that parents should be involved in their child's education has developed through the 1970s and 1980s, as demonstrated by weekly columns in a major newspaper regarding child development and child-parent-school relations. Currently, the SDE views ECFE as part of a comprehensive effort to increase high school graduation rates to 96 percent by 1996.

The Role of an Influential Legislator

Jerome Hughes, former Chair of the Senate Education Committee, is widely recognized as a dreamer and visionary, and the father of ECFE. He also has a long association with Community Education, having sponsored the initial legislation establishing state support for it in 1971 and having served as the director of Community Education in St. Paul. His research as a Bush Fellow in 1975 fostered a sustaining commitment to family support and education and a belief that "it is

cost-effective to deal with the mother [because] home is the first academy" (Hughes, 1976). Hughes decided it was appropriate to develop his concept through education rather than health or social services because "early childhood and family education should be considered preventive education." On the more pragmatic side, Hughes was careful to keep the phrase ***child care*** out of the language of the bill because "a decade ago day care was an anathema."

Hughes had a reputation of tending to operate somewhat independently. He actively solicited support and received letters of endorsement from various groups including the Minnesota Medical Association before submitting the bill. However, the evidence does not suggest that Hughes worked actively with the SDE or local school districts prior to the pilot years in developing his initiative. For years, the House would not go along with expansion, but he ". . .waited and waited." According to Hughes, ". . . like all things, once a program is begun, others get on board. The superintendents, principals, and classroom teachers were all for the status quo, but they eventually got on board as they came to believe in the responsibility and contribution of the family."

The Early Administrative Placement of the Initiative

In 1971, the Minnesota Legislature established the Council on Quality Education (CQE) to fund innovative, cost-effective programs in the public schools. In the same session, a "lid was placed on the amount local communities could raise for schools through property taxes as a first step toward equalization of funding." The premise was that if limiting spending of local communities might stifle innovation, CQE would systematically promote innovation.

CQE is remembered as the "compromise home" for the ECFE pilots when the initial bill did not pass in the House and ended up in Conference Committee. Vocal opposition to the bill had come from day care, Montessori, and private nursery schools, who were concerned about public schools becoming involved with programs for young children because "they don't know what to do with children . . . they're just going to push academics on young children . . . [and] schools do not have a good track record of working with parents." A feeling has also persisted that child-care advocates were opposed to ECFE initiative in the public schools because it might duplicate, and therefore compete with, day care or nursery schools.

CQE willingly took on the responsibility of developing ECFE. CQE staff members, especially Karen Kurz-Riemer, became strong believers in preventive services and support for families. Kurz-Riemer came to the program with a background in early childhood. She dedicated her time to working with school districts in the development of her proposals during the pilot phase; monitoring; and preparing reports to the Legislature. Kurz-Riemer remembers handling opposition from the child-care community through a ". . .strategy of inservices, site visits, phone calls and technical assistance."

CQE's initial strategy demonstrated a willingness to take on a new initiative, a capacity to deal effectively with both political and programmatic issues, and an ability to operate relatively independently from the SDE bureaucracy. Key aspects of the strategy included:

o successfully seeking administrative funds and a staffing complement during the next session of the legislature;
o bringing the most vocal opponents from the child care community onto the advisory task force as experts;
o holding public hearings to identify issues that had to be considered in any policy recommendations or decisions, thus defusing some of the vocal opposition;

- continuing to defuse any conflict with other early-education and child-care programs through inservice, site visits, and phone calls to confirm that ECFE "only offered a limited pre-school experience";
- initiating briefing sessions with Senator Hughes and House members to assure that the program would be implemented as intended;
- selecting pilot sites to assure geographic distribution statewide, as well as racial and socio-economic diversity, in order to develop as broad a constituency of support as possible;
- actively providing technical assistance to local project staff and involving them in developing statements of quality criteria; and
- maintaining active involvement in the implementation and monitoring of pilot sites through frequent site visits and annual formative evaluations.

The Role of Pilot Sites

In 1974, when CQE solicited the first proposals for pilot sites, few models of family support and education existed from which to choose. Given the pilot character of the legislation, CQE and the ECFE Advisory Task Force elected to encourage local experimentation with different service formats (CQE, 1979). Local programs were not required to serve adults a particular number of times or to serve a minimum proportion of the local population. Some pilot sites adapted available curricula and approaches (e.g., High/Scope, Parents As Teachers, Family Oriented Structured Pre-School Activity), while others developed their own materials and format. The early legislation specified that:

- programs serve children before kindergarten and below the age of six with voluntary participation by parents and their children;
- services include such components as the identification of potential barriers to learning, education of parents on child development, libraries of educational materials, family services, education for parenthood programs in the secondary schools, in-center activities, home-based programs, and referral services;
- pilot programs each serve one elementary school attendance area in the local school district, or a combination of attendance areas if deemed appropriate by CQE;
- in the determination of pilot programs, preference be given to those having the ability to coordinate their services with existing programs and other governmental agencies; and
- a local advisory committee be established with members selected by the local board of education from the attendance area being served.

Service components found in the early ECFE pilot programs included both center- and home-based parent and family education; center-based child development activities; and, to a lesser extent, health screening of children, family resource libraries, and pre-parenting education for adolescents. In 1978, outside evaluators reported that of the 22 CQE programs, nine had regular home-based components and one was beginning to implement a home-based component (Patton et al., 1978). Variation among programs was again evident in 1979: "Although all 22 [pilot] programs provide parent education in some form, the provision of other service components varies among programs" (CQE, 1979, p. 103). However, throughout the pilot phase, CQE staff consistently monitored programs to assure that parents played an active part in activities.

Over time, in spite of the initial flexibility, a core model of ECFE services began to emerge. Factors contributing to the emergence of this core model include:

- extensive networking among local program staff who tended to "borrow" the most successful practices from other programs;

- the need to appeal to as many eligible families as possible, including parents working outside the home, who tended to favor special events and weekly classes;
- funding cuts in the early 1980s that led to a decrease in the use of the more expensive home-based services; and
- the passage of statewide early health screening legislation in 1977, which minimized the need for ECFE to duplicate this service.

The Use of Evaluation Data

In launching the ECFE pilots, CQE staff and task force members made an early decision to strive for high quality programs, feeling that ". . . the pilot programs should [provide] optimum services as a point of future reference" (CQE, 1984, p. 23). An outside evaluator and two research specialists, all with national reputations, advised that the time that ". . . efforts to prove that children participating in the programs would have, for example, better school achievement might be impossible within financial and time limitations related to the program" (CQE, p. 50). They counseled that the most critical need was "to find out if the concept was workable in a variety of settings and if programs utilizing it could attain community acceptance and participation" (CQE, 1981, p. 51). Thus, the independent consultants who carried out annual evaluation efforts between 1975 and 1978 focused on assessing the success of local programs at implementation and on developing a comprehensive description of quality criteria for ECFE programs.

The formative evaluations proved critical in providing evidence to legislators that 1) the program operated according to budget and legislative specifications; 2) large numbers of parents would choose to participate voluntarily in ECFE services; 3) the program had a low average cost per participant (estimated in 1982-84 as $234 per participant involved 10 or more times); and 4) program staff, school staff, parents, and relevant community members valued ECFE and its continuation highly. The formative evaluations also generated recommendations to improve overall program implementation and led to the identification of a list of quality criteria that were used in conducting on-site reviews of each pilot program. These statements of quality criteria are still in use at local programs across the state.

Starting in 1979, CQE staff members made attempts to broaden the evaluation efforts to measure the quality of services and to look at the short-term impact of the program on parents and children. These efforts proved to be problematic, and did not yield definitive results that could be used to substantiate the worth of the program with the Legislature. What these studies did demonstrate, however, is the difficulty of identifying standardized instruments that can be used in pre-test/post-test evaluation designs; and the problems of conducting research on operating programs due to lack of funding for this type of evaluation, participant attrition, time constraints, and program changes that cannot be predicted.

The Legislature and the SDE have expressed a continuing hope, sometimes presented as an assumption with a basis in the research literature, that preventive programming focusing on parents will lead to later savings by reducing some combination of: the number of assignments of children to special education; the need for remedial services; and drop-out rates in high school. Proponents of family support and education in Minnesota (including Hughes) have linked the benefits of ECFE to the research literature on intensive early intervention programming for disadvantaged children that has documented benefits in terms of higher academic performance, lower delinquency rates, and better earning prospects (CQE, 1981; CQE, 1984; Hughes, 1976; Kurz-Riemer, 1985). These possible benefits, although not clearly established through evaluation studies of ECFE, had an undeniable appeal to both professional educators and state legislators when they considered statewide adoption of the program.

A Program that Appealed to Parents and Professionals

The Minnesota House repeatedly said "no" to Hughes' efforts to continue and expand ECFE through the pilot years. House members used Hughes' desire to extend ECFE to negotiate for other things. Gradually, ECFE's own constituency forced an end to this kind of negotiation. Program staff and parent participants had become a moving force by diligently testifying before legislative committees; hosting policy makers at program sites in their legislative districts; writing letters; making telephone calls; and lobbying for continued support and expansion of a program they perceived as a high-quality, worthwhile effort (Kurz-Riemer, 1985). Each legislative session, threats of cutbacks brought a carefully selected cross-section of parents and staff from urban, suburban, and rural sites to offer personal testimony to the legislature. It became increasingly difficult for House members to say "no" to ECFE when they were hearing appeals from their own constituents.

ECFE, a program open to all parents with young children, has been particularly successful in appealing to the middle class, non-minority family. However, the initiative continues to challenge many local programs to draw in and serve adequately minority, economically disadvantaged, or stressed families. The program is very popular across the state, but is still working on strategies to appeal to all families who might benefit from participation.

The Funding Mechanism

The legislation provides for the voluntary initiation of ECFE programs by school districts and a funding mechanism that results in: a) districts being able to pace and plan the growth of their program by gradually increasing the levy amount each year (up to .5 mill); b) districts having time to plan, because a levy passed in October results in funds being available during the following school year; c) funding from other sources, including vocational-technical state aid, fees, Community Education funds, and grants; d) funding that is categorically dedicated to ECFE, but may be used for expenditures related to the rental of space and to the use of classroom space in the district; and e) districts being able to enter into inter-district agreements in the administration of programs (critical in more rural districts) and to purchase services from community-based agencies while still using local school buildings as sites for services.

The locally driven funding mechanism is particularly appealing to both citizens and school board members who have traditionally favored local control in the operation of public schools. According to Peek, Duren, and Wells (1985):

> Minnesota citizens have consistently sought to have the locus of control for their schools as close to home as possible. This has been especially important in rural and small town Minnesota where district autonomy has been strongly guarded. Proposals that purport to enhance local control are received warmly. On the other hand, proposals that appear to wrest control out of local hands are not (p. 35).

Pre-existing licensure for parent educators through vocational education and early-childhood education allowed new programs to draw qualified staff members from: a) home-economics teachers with strong backgrounds in child development, family education, and adult education, at a time when schools were laying off these staff members; and b) early-childhood staff working in child-care centers at lower wages. Also, due to these existing licensure requirements, higher education faculty were already offering some courses that would be appropriate for ECFE staff. New licensure requirements for parent educators have built upon these earlier requirements.

Summary

Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) experienced a 10-year pilot stage prior to the passage of legislation that established a stable funding mechanism and shifted responsibility for programming to the Community and Adult Education Section of the State Department of Education. The initiative has been successful in terms of efficiency in implementation, respect for the local autonomy of school districts, and the large numbers of parents and children who have chosen to participate.

A number of factors were found to have contributed to the expansion from 34 pilot projects to implementation almost statewide by 1988. These include: the homogeneity of Minnesota's population and their receptivity to educational innovation; the early and enduring commitment of an influential legislator; the early administrative placement of the initiative that allowed relative bureaucratic autonomy; the strategic use of pilot sites; the use of formative program evaluations; the appeal of a non-deficit model of services; the adoption of an easy-to-administer funding mechanism; and the existence of a qualified labor pool. The particular benefits to shifting the initiative to Community and Adult Education will be discussed in the next chapter.

The Minnesota experience demonstrates that a program intended to be open to all families with young children does not necessarily lead to a cross-section of families choosing to take advantage of the services. One area that continues to challenge the nine sites includes being able to draw in and adequately serve all families, including those who are minorities, limited English speakers, disadvantaged, or experiencing stress due to other factors. The more urban sites, with concentrations of these types of families and larger budgets, have attempted to tailor their services to accommodate these needs. Staff in these programs have found they must do more than increase outreach for recruitment purposes. They are becoming more comprehensive in their services and are more actively involved in cooperative activities and joint ventures with community-based agencies and other subunits in the school district.

The Benefits of Basing Family Support and Education in Community Education

The preceding chapter has delineated how ECFE operates in Minnesota and described factors that appeared to influence program implementation in nine sites throughout the state. The topic of this chapter is the particular benefits of Community Education as the administrative home of ECFE in Minnesota.

Our analysis focuses on Community Education, and does not consider other types of administrative arrangements for offering family support and education services. Previous research in Minnesota (Cooke and Thomas, 1985) and across the U.S. (Hausman and Weiss, 1988; Parsons, 1987) has documented the array of departments within public schools as well as other community-based agencies and organizations that offer family support and education activities.

Our focus was imposed by design, for several reasons. First, with the passage by Congress of the Community Schools Act in 1974, and its incorporation into the Elementary and Secondary Act as Title VIII in the 1978 Education Amendments, the federal legislation specified early childhood and family education as one of the 14 program activities that ought to be part of local Community Education programs (Hanberry, 1981). Second, although researchers and policy analysts have long speculated on the advantages of basing family support and education in the public schools (Hobbs, 1978; Hobbs, et al., 1984; Hausman and Weiss, 1988), the salient characteristics of public school-based programs, and the benefits of this administrative arrangement have been underinvestigated. Third, Minnesota (along with California) offers one of the few examples of a state-level policy initiative that explicitly supports the growth of family support and education as part of Community Education. The last part of this chapter will assess the degree to which the Minnesota findings may generalize to local Community Education-based programs across the United States, many of which are grass-roots efforts and do not operate under statewide policies. The implications of this comparison should not be misinterpreted. Our objective is not to evaluate the efforts of other states in relation to Minnesota. We regard our task simply to be the elucidation of the benefits across sites and state contexts because of their relevance to determining the feasibility of such relationships on a more widespread basis.

The following section presents an analysis of the benefits -- considering a) the relationship of local ECFE programs to the state office of Community Education; and b) the relationship between the local ECFE program and Community Education within the school district and the surrounding community. The distinctions between these two relationships was an unanticipated finding of our study. For this reason, the analysis of the benefits is divided into these two types of relationships.

The State-Local Relationship

Basing the ECFE initiative in Community Education offered two distinct benefits that do not necessarily exist in other states:

- Community Education is a highly developed statewide program in Minnesota. CE operated under a local levy structure and state aid mechanism that ECFE funding could build upon; and

- Staff within the Community Education section of the SDE have provided leadership and fostered the capacity needed for the initiative to grow rapidly and uniformly across the state.

These benefits are now discussed in light of the history of Community Education in Minnesota and its relationship to ECFE.

The Development and Funding of Community Education

Community Education came into practice in Minnesota in the late 1960s, and statewide visibility and commitment followed soon after its initial appearance. During this period, a few rural and metropolitan communities opened their gyms for community sports and recreation, their auditoriums for community productions, and their classrooms for enrichment courses. Minneapolis established the first Community Education services department in the state, and several suburban schools and one rural school initiated Community Education programs (Stanley, 1980 cited in Peek, 1985, p. 66).

In 1971, the Legislature passed the Community Education bill in which up to 67 (out of 435) school districts would be reimbursed up to $5,000 each to offset part of the salary of a local Community Education director. The legislation also created a Community Education Section within the SDE (the first such section in the United States) and established the position of State Director of Community Education. At that time, only three other states had passed Community Education legislation.

In 1973, the Legislature authorized school districts to levy $1 per resident for Community Education, and in 1975, offered 50 percent matching funds for districts that chose to levy $1 or more per resident. Because school districts must make the decision to levy, Community Education comes into an individual district with at least some support in the community and within the school bureaucracy. The consistent level of state support that follows as a result of a district's decision to levy enhances the ability of local programs to develop and innovate.

Along with these events came increasing professional organization and standardization for community educators in Minnesota. The Minnesota Community Education Association was founded in 1972, and a Center for Community Education at the College of St. Thomas also began in that year. By 1974, certification standards were set and graduate courses of study had come into being. Community educators in Minnesota have forged strong linkages with educational policy makers and have built a solid foundation of grass-roots political support with participants and advocates across the state.

Without question, Minnesota is one of a handful of states that early on established a secure and comprehensive financial, political, and professional base for Community Education. This base of support was tested by, and successfully weathered, the recession and state budget crunch of the early 1980s. Beyond simply surviving, Community Education has thrived as a vehicle for educational reforms in Minnesota that have sought to broaden and deepen the scope and mission of the public schools. For example, the Legislature recently passed legislation permitting local school districts to levy $.50 for a local Youth Development Plan ". . . to encourage local citizens to look at the issues and needs to allow for more positive youth development in each district." Community Education takes the responsibility of bringing a cross-section of the community together to develop the plan and then supervises the allocation of funds generated by the levy.

Community Education also has programs that use the resources of the K-12 system to assist handicapped adults in lifelong learning, offer adult basic education programs, high school equivalency and diploma programs, and English as a second language courses. Early Childhood Family Education exemplifies the use of a state-initiated policy based in Community Education to further redefine and expand the mission of the public schools.

The Historical Relationship Between Community Education and ECFE

In 1974, enabling legislation for ECFE established an implicit relationship between Community Education and ECFE by requiring each local pilot project's advisory committee to report to the district's Community Education advisory committee. The organizational unit charged with developing the initiative (the Council on Quality Education) reviewed the intent of the original legislation with its authors in the Senate and the House, who asked CQE to maintain this relationship as the initiative developed. As a result, staff from ECFE programs and CQE staff presented at state Community Education conferences and to the state advisory council for Community Education (Minnesota State Department of Education, 1984).

Through the pilot years, the ties between ECFE and Community Education continued to develop. First, pilot projects received financial and other indirect forms of support from Community Education, especially in metropolitan areas, particularly when ECFE funding decreased in 1980-1982. Second, although staff from the pilot projects tended to maintain a strong direct relationship to CQE, some also had a reporting relationship to Community Education within the district. Finally, since the CQE grants could only support a small number of sites, Community Education programs were encouraged by CQE staff to develop ECFE services with their own sources of funds. In 1984, when legislation was proposed for statewide expansion of ECFE, the directors of Community Education actively lobbied to become the adoptive home of a program that had experienced ten years of a carefully nurtured pilot phase.

The ECFE legislation provided for administration and oversight of the program within the Community Education Section of the SDE. Any school district certified to offer Community Education was now able to levy for ECFE by a vote of the school board. Although the bill was approved as part of the Omnibus Education Aids Bill with little opposition, the additional funds requested for state-level administration or oversight were cut.

Capacity Building

The state-level effort for ECFE is currently managed by one state specialist whose position was transferred from CQE to the Community Education Section of the SDE in 1984. Both by necessity and due to her operating style, the efforts of the state specialist to draw resources from across the state, and build the capacity necessary for the initiative to grow to almost statewide implementation in less than four years, have involved extensive networking.

Particular activities that have helped the state ECFE staff person build the capacity necessary for the initiative to go statewide so rapidly include:

Training Initiatives. Both an introductory (one-credit) course and summer courses have been developed and offered across the state to ECFE staff. A peer-based regional network has been established to facilitate sharing of information and joint problem-solving. Because Minnesota has been licensing parent educators and early childhood teachers for a number of years, a number of

training opportunities already exist. Two new licensure areas will expand the number of training opportunities already available at many colleges and universities across the state.

Program Development. When the initiative first went statewide the SDE provided resources in the form of short-term regional consultants (practitioners who had been involved during the pilot years) and a 268-page program guide. Since 1985, a committee of ECFE providers has developed and disseminated a bibliography of curriculum materials across the state.

Policy Development. The ECFE state specialist has relied on committees of local ECFE staff and other interested professionals to address issues of licensure, program evaluation, and staff evaluation. Written materials have been developed and disseminated regarding health, safety, and educational standards for programs; models for coordinating services with Early Childhood Special Education; and program rules (the statute called for the State Board of Education to promulgate such rules).

Information Dissemination. The ECFE specialist routinely disseminates information to school districts and ECFE coordinators regarding policy issues and training opportunities across the state. A newsletter regarding family support and education issues is published in cooperation with vocational education. Promotional materials were developed for statewide use through a business-education partnership with an advertising agency.

State-Level Networking. An important part of the state specialist's job has been to maintain an understanding of, and support for, ECFE by participating on an interagency taskforce (the Minnesota Council on Children, Youth, and Families) and maintaining informal contact with agencies and advocacy groups across the state concerned about young children and families.

These state-level efforts have fostered the growth of a strong, commonly held ideology of family support and education as a preventive service that should be available to all parents. Across the state, a whole cadre of parent educators and early childhood educators are receiving and sharing this common message with other school staff and administrators, community-based agencies and organizations, and parents themselves. With its strong base of funding, ECFE has joined the existing array of programs available for families as a distinct set of services available in almost every local community.

The impact of this state-level coordination varied across the nine sites. Grand Rapids, which initiated its first ECFE services since the expansion legislation and employed a coordinator who had little previous experience with family support and education in the state, has benefited directly from the efforts of the state specialist in the development of the program. Of the nine coordinators interviewed, only one, who was new to her job this year, reported little use of resources facilitated by the SDE. Instead, she relied on direction from the director of Community Education and the coordinator of youth services in the district. Coordinators in the other seven sites all came to their positions with extensive experience in ECFE gained through the pilot years, and reported they relied less directly on outside resources in the development or expansion of their programs.

Efforts at the state level alone do not account for all the benefits to basing the ECFE initiative within Community Education. The following section will discuss the common benefits that were found across the nine local programs visited in Minnesota.

The Local Community Education-ECFE Relationship

Two important questions arise when discussing the benefits of Community Education as an administrative home for ECFE. First, from whose perspective is it a benefit? Second, as compared to what? Different stakeholders in local ECFE programs (e.g., public school administrators and staff, Community Education directors, ECFE staff, parents, community organizations) offer different perspectives. We will therefore seek not only to outline the benefits, but to qualify from whose perspective they are benefits.

The second question is beyond the scope of the present research. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, we did not look at, or consider, other administrative arrangements for offering family support and education services that exist in Minnesota or across the U.S. Therefore, we made no comparative evaluation between Community Education and any other possible administrative arrangement. We will attempt to speculate on this question in our concluding chapter, particularly in relation to services for economically disadvantaged or stressed families.

The following themes, which may be termed benefits of basing ECFE in Community Education, emerged through our field work in Minnesota:

1. Program stability;
2. Compatibility of philosophy and goals;
3. Access to a widely dispersed service-delivery network;
4. Strengthening of local Community Education programs;
5. Strengthening of services for targeted groups as part of regular public school programs;
6. Efficient use of both school and community resources; and
7. Diversity of staffing arrangements.

Program Stability

The Minnesota ECFE initiative utilizes a funding mechanism that is particularly attractive to all those involved. It provides a stable, predictable funding base from year to year. No cumbersome recordkeeping is required as it would be if the aid were based on average daily attendance rates. The mechanism clearly establishes the eligibility of all families with young children, permitting districts to charge and waive tuition based on local Community Education policies. *Schools have not had to choose to offer ECFE in place of something else.*

One of the greatest benefits is to the Community Education director, who receives the resources to hire an ECFE coordinator who then becomes responsible for program development and supervision. Other benefits accrue to the ECFE coordinator and staff, who do not have to engage in extensive fundraising each year and can therefore concentrate on recruiting participants and on the content of the program. At the same time, because the program is voluntary, staff remain motivated to keep their courses and services interesting and worthwhile.

Compatibility of Philosophy and Goals

The basic compatibility of ECFE and Community Education, in its broadest sense, was evident across all sites. ECFE programs were geared to meeting the needs of the local community, while maintaining a strong tradition of being a preventive service. Community Education programs, which regularly offer services for both children and adults, easily met the requirement of substantial parental involvement. Responsiveness to the needs of the community typically included an advisory

committee made up of participating parents and staff from community organizations. At a minimum, all programs were linked to community agencies for purposes of recruitment and referral. However, only one site (Duluth) had engaged in an extensive planning process with community groups prior to initiating services.

As a program open to all parents, ECFE tended to gear its services to the largest segment of the eligible population: white middle-class parents. Repeatedly, at all nine sites, parents indicated a preference for location in the public schools rather than in an agency geared only to helping people with problems. They felt it was very natural to have the program be part of Community Education.

All sites tailored services to meet the needs of parents, scheduling activities during the day, evening, and some week-end hours. Sites with larger concentrations of minority, disadvantaged, or stressed families were differentiating their core model of services to the greatest degree in an attempt to recruit and serve these families adequately.

In most cases, the initiation of ECFE services has strengthened the linkage between schools and community agencies. At the very least, all ECFE programs engage in extensive outreach in an effort to enroll and refer families typically served through other agencies such as health, social services, hospitals, and even local churches. Many of the suburban and urban programs are also coordinating their services with these agencies, and a few sites are getting involved in joint ventures to serve the at-risk family. These types of linkages are positive efforts to develop a comprehensive network of primary and secondary care services for families in a community.

The closeness and tone of the relationship between ECFE and Community Education did indeed vary, however. In a few cases, mutual adaptation was observed. From the point of view of the ECFE coordinator and staff, the relationship worked the best when they had autonomy from local Community Education practices and policies (e.g., minimum enrollment quotas, allocation of ECFE funds). In most cases, the Community Education director exercised very little of his or her authority over the day-to-day operations of the program, leaving that to the ECFE coordin tor. By contrast, the Community Education director in Minneapolis expected that ECFE, like other programs, should use its funds to leverage other district and community resources, which offered the potential for expanded services and greater collaboration in programming. In another case, the district and the Community Education director felt that ECFE should rely more on fees and have minimum enrollment quotas for a course to run, which has contributed to the slow growth of the program.

Access to a Widely Dispersed Service Delivery Network

Minnesota is a large state geographically with a large number of school districts in sparsely populated areas outside of the metropolitan area. The schools are the largest buildings in town in many rural areas. Community Education is currently administered through the local School Board. This board may choose to get involved in cooperative or contractual agreements to provide services on a shared basis. Basing ECFE in Community Education essentially built on this existing arrangement, fostering local control and using a network of schools located in neighborhoods or rural areas for services. The stable base of funds permits programs the option of renting space, as needed and available, to enhance geographic and psychological accessibility to families.

Strengthening of Local Community Education Programs

Minnesota has experienced an aggressive adoption of ECFE by local school districts. It has become a significant part of Community Education expenditures (ranging from 11 to 45 percent per district in the nine sites visited) in just three years. Some School Boards interested in offering ECFE services have actually decided to initiate a Community Education program in order to be able to levy for ECFE. In some instances, the CE program has gone on to offer additional service and activities.

ECFE has also opened the menu of existing Community Education program offerings to a new client group. For example, all ECFE staff mentioned referring parents to adult basic eduction courses if they did not have a high school diploma. One site in particular, Bloomington/Richfield, has packaged participation in ECFE with free child care for parents involved in an adult basic education class.

Strengthening of Existing Public School Programs

ECFE staff have contributed to specialized public school services for teen parents and parents of young children with disabilities. First, in a majority of the programs visited, ECFE staff expand existing programming for these target groups by offering parent support and education services on an itinerant basis in programs administered by other subunits of the district. Second, in the urban and larger suburban sites, ECFE staff are involved in joint planning and funding efforts to develop more comprehensive services for these target groups, while assuring active involvement of, and support for parents.

Efficient Use of School Resources

ECFE, as part of Community Education, operates at the margin of the public schools system. State officials talked about the benefit of this arrangement in terms of ease in monitoring where the ECFE dollars actually go, since the funds must be maintained in a separate account. *But it was not necessary to create new administrative and support structures either at the state or local level to administer the program.*

ECFE coordinators expect, and are able to draw, resources from the schools in terms of space. But space is at a premium in all the districts visited. Therefore, ECFE must compete with other district priorities. The stable financial base has allowed the district to charge reasonable administrative expenses (e.g., operation of a building, telephone, postage) to ECFE, rather than burdening the general administrative fund. The financial base has also allowed ECFE staff to lease space in the community without having to depend upon unpredictable sources of funds like fees or grants.

Diversity of Staffing Arrangements

Research done prior to the passage of the statewide ECFE legislation (Cooke & Thomas, 1985) concluded parent education was most often embedded in another professional role. Presently, Minnesota is in the process of recognizing a new profession: the parent educator. Unlike their

precursors, most staff working as parent educators or early childhood teachers in an ECFE program do not have other responsibilities in the school district.

The legislation that permitted ECFE to expand statewide also included the provision that staff be appropriately licensed. As the new standards for licensure take effect in July of 1989, many ECFE staff are pushing to move their positions onto the master teacher contract in anticipation of bargaining for a comparable salary structure to teachers in the district. An assessment of the benefits of licensure and movement of the positions onto the master teaching contract and salary structure must consider the varying perspectives of the stakeholders. Many, but not all, of the Community Education directors find this move to conflict with their employment practices for other staff. They find it both expensive and restrictive, because it conflicts with the idea that Community Education courses should be offered by anyone in the community interested and willing to do so and limits teachers to those who are appropriately licensed. The current diversity in both staffing and the wage structure for staff will be limited as these structural arrangements take place. Further, programs located in rural areas may find it difficult to recruit appropriately licensed staff for very part-time positions.

The benefits to licensure and becoming part of the teacher bargaining unit include enhanced employment stability and protection of the positions if a reduction in force is experienced in another part of the district. Symbolically, many ECFE staff also feel they will be more respected in the district and the community. To some extent, many Community Education directors and ECFE staff are saying licensure indicates that it does take a certain kind of knowledge and set of skills to support and educate adults in their role as parents.

Generalizing the Findings to Sites Outside Minnesota

Turning to the 12 sites outside Minnesota, the first obvious difference arises in the relationship between the state Community Education office and the local family support and education program. The commitment to Community Education of the 12 states in which these sites are located covers an enormous range, from states without Community Education legislation or funding to those with permissive legislation but no funding to strong Community Education states, in which state funding represents the majority of the local family support and education budget. Many local programs showed no state funding; in the program in California, state funding represented 99 percent of the family support and education budget. Although some of the states have legislation that explicitly encourages family support and education as a part of Community Education, to our knowledge, only California mandates parent education as component of Adult and Community Education. (Missouri also has a state-mandated family support and education program, but the site we studied in Missouri is unique in placing the local program under Community Education rather than some other part of the school system.)

Respondents in states with strong commitments to Community Education clearly felt that placing the family support and education program under Community Education benefited the program. In Michigan, for example, respondents cited the broader financial base Community Education could give the local program. In Missouri, a strong Community Education program resources enhance a free statewide family support and education program. Respondents in California reported a range of benefits to the state-local relationship similar to those in Minnesota: the placement under Adult and Community Education gave the program fiscal stability, professional credibility, a strong statewide organization, legislative leadership, staff development and networking, and public support.

Although many of the states have state-level coordinators for Community Education, and some have state-level coordinators of family support and education, it would require further research to document the nature and level of involvement of these individuals in local programs. Unlike the Minnesota initiative, most of the local programs in the 12 states originated within the local Community Education program as an idea of the Community Education director or other Community Education staff. Exceptions include sites in states with strong state policies or those where a strong local administrator conceived of the program and placed it under Community Education. One must bear this difference in mind when attempting to generalize the benefits found in Minnesota to other sites.

Program Stability

The stability of the 12 programs ranged according to the source(s) of funding. Of the 12, the programs in states with strong state policies and the programs with a consistent, predictable source of funding from social service agencies were the most secure.

Family support and education programs have requirements unlike those of other Community Education programs or classes. Directors speak of it as a particularly labor-intensive field and one that calls for a range of equipment and supplies. Programs serving at-risk families often provide comprehensive services and therefore have costs that are unusual in Community Education. Even programs with extensive state funding need to charge fees to cover supplies or insurance for the children.

Only two of the 12 sites rely on fees as their primary source of funding. Many of the 12 programs offer some fee-based family support and education classes, but some directors report "intermittent success in enrollment" and point out that programs striving to serve a cross-section of the population and/or families considered at risk cannot base their funding solely on a traditional model of self-supporting courses, or funding based on attendance. Parents under normal stress, much less those experiencing multiple stressors, cannot necessarily pay for classes or guarantee attendance.

Sources of funding were found to shape the types of families served by the program and the configuration of services. Many of the programs built on existing programs, like Head Start, or turned to outside sources of funding, which can dictate the content, schedule, or location of the program. If the main source of funding is the school district, the emphasis will likely be on drop-out prevention, school readiness, or serving school-age parents. If the main source is a social service agency, the program will direct its efforts to the clients of that agency. Certain federal monies require that programs meet in three-hour blocks, which eliminates parent/child classes at night for parents with very young children; other monies are only available to programs that meet in school settings.

Unlike the local ECFE programs in Minnesota, which can count on state and local support and therefore remain stable from year to year, several local programs outside Minnesota reported having to shift their emphasis in order to be eligible for a new source of funds. As one program staff-member observed, "money for programs is always seed money. Sometimes we have to think, what can we call new, what can we do that's new? Sometimes that's good, but sometimes it's silly. The program works, and if it works, you don't want to throw it away so you can try something new."

Compatibility of Philosophy and Goals

Without exception, program directors found the goals of Community Education and family support and education to be compatible. Recurrent themes included: serving the community from birth to death; addressing the pressing social problems in the local community; bringing people together to pool their talents and share their expertise; and addressing the educational needs of parents as well as children.

Access to a Widely Dispersed Service-Delivery Network

Like the ECFE programs in Minnesota, the local programs outside Minnesota delivered services in a mix of school sites, former schools now used as community centers, and community buildings. As in Minnesota, in geographically large districts, programs tended to offer classes in more than one location, often using school sites. Programs reported easy access to space in K-12 buildings after school hours, but in many areas, a current or projected baby boom, or another emphasis in the school system -- like special education or a program for the gifted -- caused a shortage of available space. This was a problem particularly for parent/child classes, which tended to be far more popular during the day than at night. Directors also raised the issues of storage of equipment and finding facilities of an appropriate scale for children. Unlike the Minnesota programs, however, these programs did not uniformly have access to funds to rent space in the community if necessary; for some programs, rental meant raising fees.

Strengthening Community Education

The 12 programs tended to originate within Community Education, and therefore to be a part of strong Community Education programs that already interpreted their mandate broadly. The Community Education directors involved regard family support and education as an integral part of their overall program.

Staff commented specifically on the increased use of other Community Education programs by participants in family support and education -- in 1987-88, across the twelve programs, from 15 to 50 percent of participants went on to take part in other Community Education activities. In some cases, a family support and education program that was free or offered at little cost to parents led to an increased demand for fee-based family support and education classes.

In several instances, by providing family support and education, Community Education has acted as a catalyst within the school system. Community Education directors observed that Community Education was an ideal place for innovation, and that often once they had started programs, other parts of the school system were more likely to follow suit.

Strengthening K-12

Almost all the program directors felt that their programs offered parents an initial positive impression of the schools and helped parents identify with their children's education, which would continue to benefit the child when he or she reached school age. When programs were located in

elementary buildings, parents could "network" with parents of school-age children, and become familiar with school staff.

Of the two linkages found consistently in Minnesota, only one generalizes to many of the sites outside Minnesota. Many of the programs worked with pregnant and parenting high school students in center-based programs, homes, and alternative high schools. Although several programs make referrals in cases of developmental delays, only one program currently works with the local Educational Service District to provide joint family support and education to young children with disabilities and their families. One unique linkage was an opportunity for high school students with disabilities to get supervised work experience in child care or as support staff.

As in Minnesota, transitional programs between family support and education and kindergarten are rare. Several of the smaller programs have kindergarten staff come into their programs as guest speakers, and one program tailors each pre-school readiness class for parents to the local elementary school in which it is offered. One program for parents of three- and four-year-olds continues to meet periodically with the parents' group after children enter kindergarten. Some programs offer classes for teachers to familiarize them with the material and the educational approach that parents have received in a parent education class. In some programs, teachers from family support and education and K-12 provide inservice training for one another.

Several of the programs involved parents from the family support and education program as volunteers in the classroom once their children reached school age. The advantage for the school, said one teacher, is the extensive experience parents have already had working with children in a classroom. In a few cases, Community Education offered these parents formal training. One program offers courses on helping children academically in elementary school. Several of the twelve programs offer family support and education to parents of children through adolescence, including one intensive drop-out prevention program for the parents of teenagers.

Efficient Use of School and Community Resources

The 12 programs outside Minnesota demonstrate extremely creative uses of school and community resources. Programs have made use of an existing administrative structure. Directors cite location in the schools as a source of credibility, both among parents and among community agencies. Being part of the school system, as one director put it, enables programs to "leverage existing school-based facilities and services more easily -- for example, school nurses provide developmental screening and inservice training because the program is perceived to be owned by the LEA." Several programs have contractual relationships with social service agencies; in those cases, program directors report that agencies find their programs cost-effective because of their low overhead.

Placement within Community Education also enables programs to turn to the community for support. The traditional linkage between Community Education, civic leaders, and community businesses, said one director, enables the program to "pull from the total community to assist us with equipment, supplies, field trips, whatever we need." Unlike the programs in Minnesota, many of these programs must turn to the community in order to survive financially or to serve high-risk families. These programs receive community support in the form of contractual relationships, and in-kind staff and resources. Often, these linkages with other community agencies enable the programs to serve an under-served portion of the population, adding a new dimension to existing services for families within the community. Several directors also raised the issue of struggling to maintain their status as educational programs, and therefore an appropriate part of the mission of

the school system, while at the same time providing the range of services to meet the needs of community agencies and families experiencing high levels of stress.

The key to the linkages was often the role of the Community Education director or family support and education coordinator, depending on the size of the program. These individuals served as bridges between the school system and the community. One major finding of this portion of the study was the amount of time these individuals spent on forging informal linkages with staff members at community agencies, often by sitting on the boards of many other community organizations. These personal linkages were often extremely difficult to maintain, due to the high turnover of staff in social service agencies.

Diversity of Staffing Arrangement

Staffing patterns varied much more outside Minnesota than within it. Many, but not all, programs require some form of licensure, although that requirement is often a personal criterion of the director rather than a state or county mandate. No universal push towards licensure was evident.

In some programs, staff members are on the same contract as K-12 teachers. Often this makes them the only teachers within Community Education to be on contract which, directors report, gives them greater respect and security. The majority of the programs, particularly self-supporting programs, have only part-time staff. One director pointed to the advantage of not being on contract: "Because we're not n the union, we do things like home visits and follow-up, which is not in a standard job description. Our teachers are allowed more preparation time. And they're paid to go to court hearings as if they were teaching." Another director commented that part-time staff makes the program cost-effective "relative to other delivery systems." Many directors reported that their staff preferred to work part-time while raising a family, and valued the innovation and flexibility of family support and education programs. However, having few or no benefits, said one director, "tends to make professionals feel unprofessional." Another director cited the disadvantage of losing "some of our better teachers to the elementary schools because of the better contract."

Directors report that staff who work with families have needs beyond the usual realm of Community Education staff, in particular when working with stressed families: sensitivity to, and training in, both child development and parenting; frequent inservice training; and peer support. Community Education directors observe that their own involvement with family support and education staff is greater than with teachers in other areas and report a high degree of camaraderie among family support and education staff.

Conclusions and Implications

The purpose of this study was to explore how family support and education programs that are targeted to families with pre-school aged children fit within schools or, more specifically, within Community Education. Another aspect of the research was to consider the benefits of such arrangements and the feasibility of such relationships on a more widespread basis. This chapter presents recommendations for further research and policy implications that derive from the present study.

Further Research

The boundary between the need for prevention and treatment becomes blurred when the needs of the highly stressed family are considered. The site profiles in Appendices A and B highlight the different approaches that these programs have attempted. The approaches vary tremendously and include:

- the establishment of intensive family school experiences or targeted parent-child classes in which social agencies refer parents with young children to programs offered through Community Education and the public schools;

- jointly sponsored programs, in which Community Education and other community-based organizations co-sponsor intensive family school experiences that include both diagnostic and treatment services and parent support and education; and

- cooperative arrangements, in which social service and public health agencies provide home visiting to stressed families with the hope that, at some point, the family will be integrated into parent education and support classes offered through Community Education.

More research is needed in this area, to document approaches to services that are able to attract and serve these families, to examine how these services fit within the continuum of services already available to families in the community, and to evaluate the effectiveness of such services. Based upon our preliminary findings, we hypothesize that the need for inter-agency collaboration to meet the needs of stressed families increases in proportion to the magnitude of stress the families are experiencing.

Second, Community Education-based programs located in suburban and rural areas face particular challenges to serving families that are at risk. Often the community does not identify a particular issue (e.g., teen parents, single parents) because concentrations of these families do not exist in particular areas of the community. For example, school administrators must first be convinced that teen parents do exist in the community and then that the schools should play an active role in supporting teens as parents. Also, even if these families are identified, they often do not fit easily into standard parent-child classes. Staff can face structural and ideological barriers to working cooperatively with other agencies in the community that are already involved with these families. Attempts to work cooperatively with other agencies often must reconcile different approaches to working with parents -- as basic as the difference between WIC nutrition clinics, which set up individual appointments with parents, and family support and education programs, whose staff tend to offer classes for groups of parents and their children. Research is needed to explore models of services that are workable in the context of these suburban and rural settings.

A third topic for future research is the evaluation of program effectiveness. Community Education-based family support and education programs rely almost exclusively on efficiency in program operations and participation rates as their primary measures of success. Even with statewide funding policies, staff do not have the time, resources, or expertise to conduct evaluations of the effectiveness of their services. Data demonstrating program effects would assist local program developers when approaching other community agencies to become involved in subsidizing parent education and support programs. Further, policy makers currently considering adoption of state policies would benefit from knowing the configurations of services that lead to positive effects for families over time. Local programs need external funding and technical assistance to undertake evaluations of the effectiveness of their services.

Adequate financial resources are a mixed blessing to programs when the needs of families that are at-risk are considered. Our research in Minnesota indicates that programs with adequate resources most often form linkages in the community in order to generate referrals and to minimize duplication of services. Programs have tended to develop parent support and education as a service distinct from other types of services needed by these families. On the other hand, we found that programs across the U.S. that operate in the absence of state funding have had to become involved in cooperative and collaborative ventures with other agencies in the community in order to survive financially. Van de Ven (1976) has pointed out that organizations will strain to maintain their autonomy; an inter-agency link may emerge because of needs for resources and/or commitment to an external problem or opportunity. He goes on to hypothesize that the greater the resource intensity and number of agencies involved, the greater the formalization and centralization of the inter-agency arrangement. The need for funding alone is unlikely to result in creations of inter-agency arrangements. Organizations must be aware of possible sources for resources and be able to achieve consensus with other organizations regarding program goals and services. More research and analysis is needed to identify state and local policies and practices that encourage agencies in the community to work together to establish comprehensive services of sufficient intensity and duration to meet the needs of at-risk families.

Finally, unlike the Minnesota initiative, most of the local programs in the 12 states originated within the local Community Education program as an idea of the Community Education director or other Community Education staff. Additional documentation of how these local programs have been developed and dissemination of this information would assist other Community Education directors seeking to initiate services in the absence of state policies or financial resources.

Policy Implications

Research on the five topics just discussed would significantly add to our understanding of the role Community Education can play in offering family support and education programs effectively. Nevertheless, in spite of the need for this further research, the findings from the present study may be reviewed for their policy implications. These are discussed in four categories: benefits to basing family support and education programming in CE, funding, appealing to a cross-section of families in the community, and the characteristics of services targeted to at-risk families.

A number of the benefits to basing family support and education programming in CE that were identified in Minnesota were found to generalize to sites located across the U.S. These benefits included: compatibility of philosophy and goals, strengthening of Community Education, strengthening of existing public school programs, and the efficient use of school and community resources. Two additional benefits, funding and diversity of staffing arrangements, varied across the other sites based on differences in state and local contexts. Specifically:

- Similar to Minnesota, only two of the 12 sites rely on fees as their primary source of funding. However, the stability of the programs ranged according to the particular funding source(s).

- Staffing patterns varied much more in the programs located across the U.S. No universal push toward licensure was evident.

A review of the funding sources for family support and education programs in Minnesota and across the U.S. demonstrates that services cannot be supported by user fees alone. For example, programs cite the need for initial resources to purchase equipment related to childrens' services and the need to rent physical space in the community. Further, the needs of staff must be considered in program planning and budgeting. Program directors discuss the need for staff with specialized training in child development, parent education and group process, and adult education. Family support and education coordinators who are developing services all talked about the need for technical assistance and the benefits of being able to network and exchange information with other service providers in their own states. Finally, time must be budgeted for staff members to meet on a regular basis as part of their jobs to discuss particular cases and to support each other in meeting the needs of families.

Another principal finding is that parents will voluntarily attend family support and education classes. Programs do not need to rely on gimmicks for children in order to recruit parents. However, the experiences of the sites in recruiting parents indicate that careful attention must be paid to outreach strategies in order to reach a cross-section of eligible families. Even after recruiting parents, programs must be prepared to tailor services to meet the particular needs of different types of families. Programs must expect to devote additional staff time and resources to developing cooperative and collaborative linkages with other community-based agencies.

This study points out that programs that are particularly successful at serving at-risk families have a number of characteristics in common. First, staff are adept in developing, and taking the time to develop, strong personal networks among other agencies in the community concerned with families. Communication across organizational boundaries is both formal (e.g., joint participation on boards and task forces) and informal. Staff are careful to design the parent education and support services so as not to compete with other services (e.g., child care) and are willing to compromise on their specific goals and services. Second, staff are able to identify multiple local funding sources for activities, particularly in the absence of state aid or local entitlements. Third, services are packaged to meet the needs of both parents and children. Some program staff were quite innovative in developing comprehensive services that combine parent support and education with adult basic education classes, child care, transportation, counseling, and/or vocational training. Finally, staff rely far more on group process techniques in working with parents than on a prepared syllabus of topics. Community Education has a significant contribution to make by serving as the catalyst for increased cooperation and collaboration between agencies and programs concerned with families and young children.

Profiles of Nine ECFE Programs in Minnesota

We used a multiple case study approach to evaluate the implementation of ECFE in Minnesota and to examine Community Education as a home for family support and education services. The general research strategy called for in-depth interviewing at each site, the collection of documentary evidence, and non-participant observation of program activities.

The nine programs were chosen to maximize variation on theoretically meaningful variables, not to represent the population of ECFE programs or the larger population of school districts in the state. We asked the ECFE state specialist to nominate ECFE programs that varied along a number of dimensions. First, the sites selected would represent different geographic settings: three urban, three suburban, and three rural sites. Second, we sought programs that were administered under a variety of arrangements (e.g., a single district, one district purchasing ECFE services from another, cooperative arrangements). Third, the Community Education programs serving as the administrative home for ECFE had to represent a range of operating philosophies. Fourth, the programs had to have been in operation for different lengths of time (e.g., programs initiated during the pilot years, ones initiated since the levy passed in 1984, and a program in its first year of operation). Finally, we looked for programs that offered different types of services (e.g. parent-child classes; home visits; sibling care; targeted services to particular types of parents, including teen parents or single parents).

Once we had reviewed site nominations with the ECFE state specialist, we contacted the Community Education directors and ECFE coordinators by mail and phone to request their participation in the study. A preliminary visit was made to each program during the week of April 11-15 to review the scope of the study, request the cooperation of the CE director and ECFE coordinator in completing a written questionnaire regarding their programs, and set up a schedule to carry out in-depth interviewing of key staff and observations of program activities. During the preliminary visits in two districts (Duluth and the Freshwater Cooperative) it became apparent that Community Education was really the "silent partner," providing local funding through the levy mechanism, but having little or no involvement in the administration of the ECFE program. We therefore decided to focus data collection less on the Community Education programs in these sites, and more on the factors that led to those particular administrative relationships.

On-site data collection occurred during April and May of 1988 and included four major steps. Interviews were initially conducted with state-level personnel, including the manager of the Community Education and Adult Education Section of the SDE and the ECFE state specialist. Second, between one and four days was spent at each site. Activities included: in-depth interviewing of Community Education directors, ECFE coordinators, and other key district and ECFE staff; review and collection of a wide range of documents including program announcements and brochures, statements of program philosophy and goals, minutes of meetings and other official records of programmatic activities, records of participation of parents and children, job descriptions for ECFE staff, and materials used in activities with parents and children; and observation of two to eight activities per site. Third, ECFE coordinators were asked for names and phone numbers of community-based agency personnel with whom they had had some contact. Some on-site interviews and a number of telephone interviews were conducted to verify the scope of community involvement with ECFE. Fourth, to corroborate the current findings, we reviewed summaries of previous interviews conducted in Minnesota in 1987 as part of a study undertaken by the Harvard Family Research Project to trace the early formulation and implementation of the ECFE initiative.

The following section contains profiles of the nine ECFE programs visited in Minnesota. The purpose of the site-specific profiles is to illuminate the basic issues in the design and administration of

family support and education programs through Community Education. As such, they are not intended to be evaluations of the individual programs.

We want to emphasize strongly that all on-site data collection was completed by June of 1988. These profiles report only what we saw prior to this point. In many school districts we saw indications that ECFE is still emerging and changing as a new program initiative. Even now it is too early to predict the ultimate effectiveness of ECFE at strengthening families.

The following framework was used to analyze the data and prepare the individual program profiles:

*Setting
*Community Education in the District
*ECFE Goals and Philosophy
*Program History
*Program Characteristics
    Services
    Participants
    Curriculum
    Coordination with the Public Schools
    Linkage to the Surrounding Community
*Funding
*Lessons from this Site

Charts summarizing funding levels and sources; staffing, types of service; participation; use of facilities; and evaluation are included in Appendix D.

Each of the profiles has been reviewed by the ECFE coordinator and the director of Community Education of that relevant program. Factual inaccuracies have been corrected based on their comments.

Minneapolis Public Schools

Community Education & Early Childhood Family Education: "I think that Community Education wanted ECFE in the worst way. They've made some great efforts to incorporate us into Community Education. Frankly, sometimes I think community educators understand ECFE better than ECFE people understand the concept of Community Education.

"As a group, I don't think that my ECFE colleagues are as open to CE as they could be, and that's really their loss because they're not tapping a wealth of resources. Community Education is a wonderful vehicle for what ECFE is trying to do. Community Educators don't say, 'We can't do that because . . . '; they say, 'How can we do this in spite of . . . .' Community Education -- in its truest form -- does not try to do everything, but it makes a wonderful conduit. If another group can do it better, then they should do it. Community Education doesn't try to control or do everything."

Robert Brancale, ECFE Coordinator

Setting

Minneapolis is located in southeastern Minnesota on the Mississippi River to the west of St. Paul. With a population of 360,000, it is the still largest city in Minnesota, although the population of the city has been declining since 1960. The majority (an estimated 86 percent) is white. The minority population of the city is composed of: blacks (8 percent), Asians (3 percent), Native Americans (2 percent), and Hispanics (1 percent). Currently 15 percent of the population is 65 years of age or older. Only 17 percent of the Minneapolis taxpayers have school-aged children. Paul Boranian, the Director of Community Education, notes that with these demographics, the "one instrument that can bring about change in the district is community schools. Community schools create linkages to the ***whole*** community."

A recent school district report characterized Minneapolis as facing "problems similar to other urban cities. The increase of the poor and aged in the inner city and citizen concern about crime typify the problems of all large cities. In general, however, the urban problems in Minneapolis do not seem insurmountable."

The Minneapolis public schools enrolled 38,763 students during 1987-1988. An estimated 42.6 percent of the student population were minorities. A central district office handles student assignments to programs across the city as part of the desegregation effort. The student population is served by 43 elementary, six junior, and seven secondary schools, and five special education centers. The public schools also operate the Minneapolis Technical Institute, an ice arena, and a flight transportation center.

Community Education in Minneapolis

Community Education has a long history in Minneapolis, dating back to 1882 when evening classes were taught in two schools. According to a Community Education fact sheet prepared by the district, these classes enrolled 900 (mostly men) and offered reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling, general lessons, and industrial drawing.

Through the years, Minneapolis has maintained its role as a leader in Community Education. In 1944, community schools were introduced to the district. In the mid-1960s, the Board of Education appointed the first consultant in adult education. The district did not initially allocate large amounts of funding, for staff or programming. First, Community Education had to establish credibility with the community and the district's educational professionals.

Paul Boranian stresses that community school programs were "established one by one based on community interest. Strong rapport had to be established with building principals, and the labor union." The first community school coordinators were building teachers working additional hours. Boranian's philosophy -- "use Community Education dollars to leverage other funds and resources" -- began to emerge as CE started receiving federal funds, and became involved in cooperative planning with the Park Board and other community agencies to address social issues and poverty in the city.

The Adult and Community Education programs were disbanded for a brief period in the late 1960s when a public school referendum was defeated. In 1968, the Board of Education once again initiated Community Education after a study showed that such programs were cost effective and feasible on the basis of their social value to the community . . . and offered a return on tax expenditures. The new department was quick to establish partnerships with public and private agencies, as well as the business community.

In 1971, the Community Education program in Minneapolis was able to assign full-time coordinators to community school locations. The program expanded during the early 1970s when the state began to subsidize local funding and authorize districts to levy $1.00 per capita for Community Education.

The current mission of Community Education in Minneapolis is "to provide programs and services which maximize the use of people and resources." Services and activities are currently offered in the following areas:

- general adult enrichment classes;
- home improvement classes;
- adult special programs (ESL, GED and literacy);
- school age child care;
- older adults program;
- specialized classes for adults with handicaps;
- driver education and motorcycle training;
- sports;
- continuing education;
- community schools; and
- ECFE.

Services and activities are housed in a variety of facilities and settings including 40 school sites; apartment complexes; churches; libraries; and senior citizen, park board, and other community centers.

The total budget for Community Education FY 1988 was $7.1 million (including ECFE) and is expected to grow to $8.1 million in FY 1989. Approximately 90 percent of the projected increase is due to the growth of ECFE. In FY 1989, ECFE is projected to account for 33 percent of the Community Education expenditures.

ECFE Goals and Philosophy

A recent publication describing the ECFE program in Minneapolis states the mission as "build[ing] and support[ing] the confidence and competence of Minneapolis parents and expectant parents in providing the best possible parent-child interaction and environment for the total development of their children, from birth to kindergarten enrollment. The program builds partnerships among the home, the school district, the city, and community agencies. ECFE strives to ensure equal access for all Minneapolis families to services . . . ."

History

Minneapolis was home to one of the six original ECFE pilot sites in 1974-75. In FY 1976 a second site was added; in FY 1980 two additional sites were initiated (one of these sites had been operating previously with another source of funds). By FY 1983, the four programs had merged into three, both in order to expand the service area and because of legislative funding cuts.

When the School Board agreed to levy for ECFE in 1984, it did so under four conditions. First, the Minneapolis public schools will only maintain involvement in the program if state aid continues. Second, the program must operate under the priorities of the K-12 program. Third, program coordination and evaluation had to improve. Fourth, the initiative must stress serving at-risk families. Bob Brancale commented that "This fourth condition and the lack of space in the school district are what really gave us the impetus to expand involvement on a cooperative basis with agencies in the community."

The transition in 1985-86 from the three pilot programs to an initiative under Community Education was not an easy one. "It was a real challenge for me coming here from being an ECFE coordinator in a suburban school district," said Bob Brancale. "The staff in the pilot sites had been very autonomous. The programs served only their own attendance areas. The emphasis was on neighborhood programming and not on establishing cooperative linkages with other agencies in the community. I'll always remember my first year and a half in Minneapolis as one of turmoil." The shift to Community Education, and from neighborhood to city-wide services, created a difficult transition. A number of the staff who had worked in the pilot sites left for other jobs.

"I lobbied hard for us to pace our growth by having the School Board gradually increase the amount of the levy," remembered Brancale. "It has grown quickly over the last three years, but the Board has just levied the maximum amount allowable for next year. I'd say at this point we are in a constant growth and training mode."

Program Characteristics

Services

The scope and diversity of ECFE have expanded tremendously during the last three years. Major program components currently include:

Parent-Child Classes. Weekly classes that last two hours are held at eight regional centers (housed in school district buildings) and 40 satellite sites (in parks, hospitals, social service agencies and centers). Classes meet for four to eight weeks during the school year. Fees range from $12 to $24, depending upon the number of sessions, and are easily pro-rated or waived if families cannot afford to pay. Classes held at, or near, public housing sites advertise a $2 to $3 fee per session and may also be waived on request. Scheduling varies by location. City-wide over 50 percent of the classes are scheduled during the morning hours.

All classes include a 15- to 45-minute parent-child interaction time; a parent discussion time scheduled simultaneously with supervised activities for children; and some type of closing activity (e.g., a song). Groups are formed around specific issues of child development (e.g., baby fitness, sibling rivalry); age ranges of children (e.g., infants, preschoolers, toddlers, mixed ages); or special interests of the community or parents being served (gay and lesbian parents, fathers, step-parents, Hmong parents, families and stress). Supervised early childhood activities are provided during class sessions for all children in the family aged birth through five.

ECFE for the Ramsey Special Education Preschool Program. ECFE staff provide discussion and support groups for parents of young educationally handicapped children attending special education preschool classes. Classes are scheduled as a series of sessions, but parents may elect to attend only a few

of them. All activities are at no cost to parents. Free child care for siblings and transportation (parents ride the bus with their children) are available upon request. Recruitment of parents is an ongoing activity. Staff members report that personal contacts through telephone calls and home visits have worked best. Many of the sessions include having parents enter the classroom of their child, although the parents tend to observe the early childhood special education staff working with the children. An observation of one session demonstrated that even with encouragement from the ECFE parent educator, parents defer to the special education teachers, which illustrates the difficulty of blending the ideologies of special education and ECFE even when the structure is in place.

Special Events. A number of single events are offered each quarter at sites throughout the city. During the spring of 1988 approximately 45 were scheduled. Activities included face painting, fire safety, family nights, visits to the zoo, berry picking, kindergarten readiness, and an inter-racial family workshop. Events were free or carried a $2 to $3 registration fee that could be waived upon request.

The Work and Family Resource Center has recently opened in downtown Minneapolis at the Education Center of the College of St. Thomas and currently offers four to eight activities per week. The program is in the process of being developed and will offer noon-hour bag lunch meetings, managers' breakfasts, half-day programs, and one-on-one information and support.

ECFE for Teen Parents. ECFE's philosophy is to "approach teen pregnancy from a comprehensive point of view and stress cooperation with other school programs," says Kate Horst, an ECFE lead teacher. Thus, ECFE is dependent upon the existing educational options for teen parents in the school district and the community. Options in which ECFE is involved include:

1. The Pregnant Adolescent Continuing Education (PACE) Center located at a junior high school as an alternative educational and support program for pregnant teens. An ECFE parent educator offers parenting classes while other school district staff provide prenatal education, career counseling, and individualized instruction. Prenatal care and supervision is offered in conjunction with the Minneapolis Health Department.

2. The Mother and Infant Care Education (MICE) Programs are offered at three high schools in the city. Major funding for the programs comes through private grants channeled through the special education department of the public schools and Hennepin County. Services include day care, counseling, and support for high school teen parents during their regular school day. Students spend one class period each day in a parenting group offered by an ECFE staff person or the coordinator of the program and one hour in the day-care center working with their children under the supervision of aides.

3. The Neighborhood MICE Program is co-sponsored by the Greater Minneapolis Day Care Association and the Minneapolis Public Schools, with the support of private grants. The program locates family day care homes within six blocks of a public or alternative high school that will be attended by the teen parent. Daily transportation to and from the day care home and school is provided. Parent support classes are offered by an ECFE staff member.

4. The Outreach to Parents: Training and Instructional Opportunities, Networking and Support (OPTIONS) Program is a multi-agency effort based at a Community Education Center and offers breakfast and lunch, GED preparation classes five days a week, day care, vocational counseling, transportation, and a weekly support group. Parent education services are offered twice a week by ECFE staff members. Funding for this program is supplemented by an area foundation.

ECFE also offers teen parenting groups in cooperation with various community-based agencies including Eastside Neighborhood Services, the Indian Health Board, Lutheran Social Services, Pilot City, and Minnesota Early Learning Design (MELD).

Family School is a collaborative program between the Minneapolis Public Schools and the Minneapolis Children's Medical Center (MCMC). The program operates as one component of a larger configuration of services at the Medical Center, called Good Beginnings. "We started some ECFE classes right at the hospital in the lobby," remembered Jolene Pearson, the lead teacher. "All the parents had to do was walk past and our service was visible. That worked fairly well except the issue of space really was a problem. Also, it seemed fruitless to be offering at-risk parents weekly classes when they really needed more intensive services. This led to the idea for Family School."

The program is designed specifically for families with babies and toddlers who are at-risk due to the parents' isolation or minimal support systems; lack of adequate parenting skills; history of abuse or neglect in their own childhood or their earlier parenting experiences; or psychological problems that interfere with parenting, including parents who are in treatment for chronic mental illness. Program announcements clarify that the program "is not designed to work with families in which a parent has an acute mental illness, mental retardation below the educable range, active chemical dependency, or where there is active child abuse."

A combined staff from the Medical Center and ECFE, including a parent educator, early childhood teachers, child care workers, a clinical social worker, and a psychologist, are responsible for providing services. Services include:

- clinical mental health and psycho-social services for families;
- parent and child interaction groups;
- parent education sessions;
- parent group therapy;
- infancy and toddler play activities; and
- two meals and nutritional information.

In addition, individual diagnostic and treatment services may be contracted through the clinical services component of Good Beginnings.

Family School is a distinct program at a site that has been renovated by the Medical Center. Transportation for parents is arranged through the Minneapolis public schools. Families are referred by social service agencies and participate in an initial assessment process that includes home visits to aid in the development of an individual treatment plan. Once accepted in the program, families (a total of 10-12 adults) attend two full days a week for 12 weeks. A case manager meets with the family on a regular basis and coordinates the treatment plan. Aftercare is available for individual families. Arrangements to cover the cost of Family School can be made with insurance companies, medical assistance programs, and other human service agencies.

Premie and Parent Play and Learn is a six-week class especially for prematurely born infants who are currently between three and 12 months (corrected age) and their parents. Five series of classes were scheduled during 1988 (January - November). The primary purpose of the class is to assist parents in developing pleasurable, reciprocal interactions with their infants at the time they leave the special care nursery of the Minneapolis Children's Medical Center. Parents receive the information about the classes before the infant is discharged.

Classes are scheduled for 1 1/2 hours and follow a common format: 1) parent discussion of the new things they observe their baby doing; 2) presentation of a developmental topic (e.g., muscle tone, movement, cognition); 3) parent and infant activities to enhance infant development; and 4) a parent sharing time (common issues include how to explain chronological versus adjusted age or how to keep from comparing babies to full-term counterparts). A book-lending library is also available to parents.

ECFE and the Minneapolis Children's Medical Center co-sponsor these classes. Parents pay a fee for participation based on a sliding scale ($0 - $25 for six weeks). An area foundation provides additional funding.

Participants

ECFE served 1,009 different parents (in classes and special events) and 1,712 children (an estimated 8 percent of the eligible population) during 1986-87. Of the parents served, an estimated 55 percent had low incomes, 30 percent were single parents, and eight percent (80) were teen parents.

In 1987-88, the total number of different parents served in a class or special event grew to 3,508 (the total goes down to 2,758 when participation in special events is not included). A total of 2,231 different children participated in a class or special event (approximately 22 percent of the eligible population). Of the parents served, an estimated 42 percent had low incomes; 38 percent were single parents; 11 percent (405) were teen parents.

Curriculum

The curriculum for children stresses activities that are developmentally appropriate and "planned in an environment that fosters fun, exploration, and family learning. Emphasis is placed on activities that can be replicated at home," said Karen Kurz-Riemer, the ECFE staff person responsible for agency coordination. "What Minneapolis does is a bit different from many other districts. You'll see more variety in class titles rather than classes divided simply by age groups. Many districts offer sibling care as an additional service, which means there is a room allocated as the ECFE classroom for children, another room for sibling care, and another one for parent education. We have this arrangement in only one or two sites across the city. Here, the class may be geared to a certain age group, but actually early childhood staff use one classroom and must plan activities for mixed ages because parents can bring all their pre-school age children."

The materials used in parent groups vary tremendously. Parents may sign up for classes designed to offer support, information and discussion of particular topics, or book study groups. On any one day parents attending a neighborhood site may meet to discuss a chapter from *Without Spanking or Spoiling* by Elizabeth Crary, but end up talking very candidly about sometimes wanting to strike their children and how they cope with these feelings. A group of Hmong mothers may meet to learn how to use the surplus food they receive by making oatmeal cookies, an activity that also emphasizes reading a recipe and using a measuring cup. Each of the eight woman wants a chance to use the electric mixer. A staff member at Family School may stop by the office of the lead teacher to comment that progress is being made -- some of the parents remained with their children in the play area rather than dropping them off and going immediately to the smoking area. Teen parents attending the OPTIONS program may talk about needing to take a day off of school to cash their welfare checks and buy money orders to pay various monthly bills.

Coordination with the Public Schools

Beyond the use of school space for classes, ECFE is linked to the public schools in the following programming areas: home visiting for outreach and parent education classes for parents of young children with educational handicaps; providing parent support and education activities and home visiting to junior high and high school students enrolled in comprehensive district- and community-based programs for pregnant teens and teen parents; and home visiting to parents of four-year-olds enrolled in two early childhood centers, a new initiative of the superintendent.

Currently, ECFE staff are working with early childhood special education staff on a joint effort for 0- to three-year old children with special needs. At this point ECFE and early childhood special education are planning to co-fund staff positions and require dual licensure. The services are still unfolding but will be parent- and child-focused, with a multi-disciplinary team of professionals handling diagnostic services. Also involved in the planning effort are staff from the Minneapolis Health Department (the chair of the interagency committee), Hennepin County Community Services, and a number of representatives from community and professional groups concerned about young children.

Clare Jewell, who has managed the development of the partnership between ECFE and early childhood special education, said that it has come about for a number of reasons: "an initial receptivity to the idea by both sides; a willingness to explore and discuss options; the availability of financial resources; the involvement of staff from both sides who have the authority to coordinate services; and a positive history of working together." Bob Brancale added that "Clare is well respected by the early childhood special education coordinator, who was involved in interviewing her for the position."

Linkage to the Surrounding Community

ECFE in Minneapolis has established linkages to the surrounding community in terms of outreach, cooperation, and collaboration.

The program employs a number of outreach workers who distribute program information city-wide on a regular basis; make presentations in various locations; staff information tables at complementary conferences, exhibits, and community events; and issue frequent press releases. These efforts are geared directly to eligible parents, as well as agency representatives who are encouraged to 1) refer parents to ECFE activities, and 2) initiate contact with ECFE in order to provide services to families on a cooperative basis.

According to Karen Kurz-Riemer, "Our partnerships are used to service populations that are difficult to reach through the standard parent-child classes in the neighborhood sites. Currently, ECFE is involved in cooperative relationships with almost 40 different agencies and community groups." Kurz-Riemer acknowledges that many of these relationships have developed because the agencies "usually want our parent education resources and we think this is a very appropriate role for ECFE." Examples of these cooperative arrangements include:

- ECFE provides a parent educator and flyers advertising the classes; the Children's Home Society, as part of its day-care program, provides the facilities, an early childhood staff person, and handles outreach and registration;

- ECFE provides parent education services to teen parents through Lutheran Social Services;

- ECFE provides early childhood activities and a supervised parent-child interaction period for families new to Minneapolis and the U.S., (parents also attend ESL classes); and

- an ECFE staff person co-facilitates a parent group of high-risk parents involved with the Pillsbury United Neighborhood Services;

Karen Kurz-Riemer stressed that maintaining cooperative relationships does take ongoing planning. "When there were just a few of these arrangements, things could be done verbally. Now we're finding that we need some kind of written agreement to make sure there is an understanding of who is providing what. We have had some misunderstandings where each side thought the other was handing the outreach, the

snacks, or the transportation. Also, the availability of resources changes from year to year. So the written agreement will let us know how the arrangement was handled in previous years and will serve as a starting point in planning for subsequent years."

The partnership between the Minneapolis public schools, through ECFE, and the Minneapolis Children's Medical Center to develop and initiate Family School is an example of small-scale collaboration. Resources have been merged to permit the development of an organizational subunit that can operate somewhat autonomously from the schools and MCMC without creating a separate bureaucratic structure. ECFE has provided a parent educator, early childhood teachers, child care assistance, transportation, and equipment for early childhood activities. MCMC has provided the facilities, a psychologist, a clinical social worker, an occupational therapist, a secretary, janitorial services, the food program, and kitchen equipment. In addition, full diagnostic services are available through other units of MCMC.

Beyond the commitment of resources, staff involved with Family School have developed a workable model of services that merges educational and therapeutic ideologies regarding treatment services for very stressed or dysfunctional families. Staff have addressed number of issues in the initiation of this partnership that will be highlighted in the Lessons section of this profile.

Funding

The ECFE budget has grown tremendously over the past three years, from approximately $300,000 in FY 1985 to $1.8 million in FY 1988. Expenditures are projected at $2.7 million for FY 1989. Sources of revenue include: the local levy (66 percent), state aid (33 percent), and local fees (1 percent). Participant fees are currently $1.50 per class hour, the standard rate for all Community Education classes.

The budget breakdown by major program area during 1987-88 was:

	Allocation(%)	Families Served (%)
Regional Centers	52%	35%
Work and Family Resource Center	4%	40%
ECFE/Early Childhood Special Education	3%	9%
Family School (ECFE/MCMC)	6%	1%
ECFE/Teen Parents	7%	12%
Premie and Parent Classes	1%	3%
Administration and Coordination	27%	--

Lessons from This Site

A Continuing Need for Trial and Error Learning

Bob Brancale traced the development of the weekly class format for parents and children. "The separation of parent/child interaction and parent education was developed by one of the original CQE pilot sites. Almost all the subsequent proposals for pilot sites built it in as an approach. A lot also depended on which department within the district had responsibility for the program. Those folks into testing, accountability, and professionalism were drawn to High/Scope and its structured curriculum. Those of us aligned with Community Education stressed the adult education model and believed that adults learn differently than children. We learned early that approaches needed to be tailored to different types of adults: single parents, step parents, and fathers.

"A lot of that trial and error goes on even now. Here in Minneapolis we've been growing rapidly over the past three years. We are learning there are different needs. For example, just within the group we refer to as teen moms, teen moms who are no longer in school have different needs from those who are in school and bringing their babies with them. The teen parents who have dropped out tend to be on

their own and have basic survival needs. Moms living with their parents may have a somewhat more stable environment, at least in terms of family support."

Autonomy to Cooperation

Bob Brancale's early experience in ECFE during the pilot years highlights: 1) the organizational autonomy that the Council on Quality Education (CQE) felt was necessary for the initiative to grow and develop as a new program area; and 2) a shift toward valuing cooperation when ECFE moved to Community Education. "In the early days, when ECFE was being run as a few pilot projects, the CQE leadership was very concerned about autonomy. We didn't have state-mandated licensure requirements for staff; there was concern about aligning the program administratively with vocational education or with Community Education. The fear was that Community Education wouldn't require a license and wouldn't require the professionalism, that ECFE would be looked at like a coffee klatch or babysitting.

"The reality was that when the legislative funding cuts came in the early 1980s, many of us used funds from Community Education and vocational education to survive. So when the initiative was finally transferred to Community Education, some of the ECFE programs already had a relationship with CE. None of the pilot sites in Minneapolis worked with Community Education. They each were very autonomous and were not in a cooperative mode with CE. Community Education in Minneapolis has maintained the philosophy that you match what you do to the needs wherever they exist. We've learned in the process that we absolutely must be more flexible. It's been an eye-opener for the ECFE staff here. It's come down to the realization that we don't have to do everything; there are certain areas of parent education that we don't have to do. Other agencies in the community can meet the particular needs better, so why not let them?"

Cooperation Within the Public Schools

The level of cooperation in the school district has been uneven. "In Minneapolis," said Bob Brancale, "the staff who are serving the at-risk-teen parents, young children with disabilities, people in poverty -- they see us as a resource. They don't see us as threatening to take their jobs. Some school district personnel may see us as a threat. Some principals may see us as taking space in their buildings. A lot of them don't see ECFE as a priority and don't want to provide space. One actually told me he would rather add an art room than a room for ECFE. A few of them think we are getting parents too involved, too empowered. They saw parents go directly to the School Board when the staff in the pilot sites didn't want to shift under Community Education. So how do they handle that circumvention of the normal reporting lines? A few choose not to cooperate or work with ECFE.

"I attribute what has happened with special education to the personality and creativity of the special education preschool coordinator and the director of special education. The early childhood special education coordinator has always seen the situation as win-win: we could provide something for each other. We were assigned to the early intervention committee together trying to figure out services for three-year-olds, defining the gaps and overlaps in services. We knew the legislation was going to mandate special education services down to birth, so the committee decided to look at services for 0- to three-year-olds. ECFE was the only department represented on the early intervention committee with funds that were not already allocated. So we were a great resource.

"We spent a lot of time and energy to figure out how to make the transition because we didn't want ECFE to be perceived as coming in and taking over. We strongly encouraged early childhood special education staff to apply for the lead teacher position to coordinate that component. There were some internal political issues regarding the interview process and it took us about a year and a half to hire a person. During that time we also did some other cooperative things. We put together a couple of joint inservice opportunities that helped to break down the barriers. From day one, any planning committees

have included staff from early childhood special education and ECFE staff. I think there is a strong feeling of joint ownership because staff designed the program to fit the needs. ECFE has not served as anything other than a resource to the special education preschool.

"I also coordinate the latchkey program offered through Community Education. It seems that we are always losing classroom space for latchkey. Now we've had some crossover of staff between these programs and sharing of classroom space. For ECFE, it gives the program foothold in a school building. Neighborhood programs can be started during the day and the space can be used at night. For latchkey, it gives the program more security because it is less likely to be removed when the space is being used the whole day."

Establishing Cooperative Arrangements in Urban Areas

Sometimes cooperative arrangements are a solution to a particular problem, as Bob Brancale explained. "In Minneapolis we had a mandate from the School Board to serve the at-risk population. We looked at the demographics -- who we needed to reach and the neighborhoods we needed to be in -- and there just wasn't any space in school buildings in these areas. My pleas for space went unanswered because of the need for K-12 classroom space.

"We started cooperating with other agencies in the community in order to survive. I realized that I had the funds to pay staff, the curriculum, ***and*** the flexibility to go into the community. So that's what we did. I initially met with representatives from eight or nine agencies just trying to find out the connection they had with particular types of families. Almost all of them gave me time and listened because they saw we came with financial resources; even the agencies that are historically independent from the public schools: the Indian Health Board, the Division of Indian Work, and the Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center. It didn't all happen overnight, but at least they listened and none of us felt like the other was trying to pick his or her pocket. Actually, the one agency with which we initially did not do much was Head Start. We now have a budding partnership with them.

"One of the things that we've learned to do when we try to set up cooperative relationships is to base them on resources rather than on the exchange of dollars. We try to figure out what we can do for them in exchange for what they do for us. One area is inservice, where the agency agrees to include my staff in their inservice activities and we agree to do the same for them. This sets in motion the development of a trusting relationship between those who are the direct providers of service to families in the community. In fact, some of our services have grown out of staff starting to meet together. We've become involved with the Neighborhood Involvement Program (NIP), a social service agency that provides community services for the working poor who don't have good medical or health insurance. They have a dental clinic, counseling center, a rape and sexual assault center, a clothes closet, all heavily staffed by professionals, who donate their time, and graduate interns.

"When a gay and lesbian organization folded, NIP picked up some of the services and were planning to offer awareness training to some of their interns. Some of our staff were invited to the inservice in order to help them work with gay and lesbian families. Then the agency asked us to add a parent education class for gay and lesbian parents. Now we offer two classes for gay and lesbian parents.

"I feel we have a tight partnership now with this organization. We've started providing space at a community center for a few of their adult groups. In addition, some of their interns are students from the Adler Institute and they are required to offer a parent education course that draws from Adlerian theory. Because they like our model, they've added a parent-child interaction period. We provide the early childhood teacher and advertise the class. They supervise the parent education person and what is being offered in the class.

"Everything we do is with an informal letter of agreement regarding the exchange of resources. We don't pay rent at any of the agencies where we offer services. We also have access to school district equipment and materials so that if we're offering an ECFE activity in a private facility, we can bring our own equipment. We needed help with outreach in one of our north end communities because it's always safer to pair people up for home visits. We approached a neighborhood service agency and there was no problem with getting one of their staff to go with one of ours. We then asked what we could do for them. The head of the agency mentioned his after-school tutoring program for elementary school children and their need for a computer -- even an older one. It just happened that the top administrators in the district were getting new IBMs. So I was able to get one of the old machines on loan for the year.

"Another example is our relationship with the Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center. They offer crisis intervention and have a treatment program for women who are chemically dependent. They wanted to add a parent education component. So we tried to match our model to theirs, provided equipment for the early childhood room, and helped to pay the early childhood teacher. We've been trained and given access to their parent education materials, which are designed to meet the needs of the Native American community."

Small-Scale Collaboration

The Family School demonstrates how one staff person, operating in a boundary-crossing role, can foster a relationship between two very complex, but different organizations: the Minneapolis public schools and the Minneapolis Children's Medical Center. Bob Brancale attributed the initial success of this relationship to Jolene Pearson, whom he described as "very bright, with the political savvy needed to deal with school district and hospital politics, and a scrounging ethic from her experience in the Peace Corps that helps her just make things happen. She's very good at figuring out how to work around problems that inevitably come up."

Jolene Pearson added that she initially has been allowed to operate "quite independently from either side. The Medical Center has their own issues and staff are very busy. When I need to see someone, I make an appointment. Basically I go and share my ideas at meetings and hospital staff give me input. I've then figured out what might work. I do the same with ECFE. Just this year, ECFE has added a lead staff person who handles all the special programs. Though initially, I responded directly to Bob Brancale. We've known each other for a number of years so there is a lot of trust and mutual respect. I think overall, I've been very free to do what I think would work."

Part of Jolene Pearson's job has been making good ideas work. She offered an example: "We were able to get a small grant to pay for a prenatal developmental therapist from the Medical Center to work in the classes for parents and their premature infants. She was then able to shift a few hours of her time each week from the unit to these classes. I had the time to do a lot of the background work: organizing the class, ordering equipment, the flyers, and the outreach in order to make it work.

"Part of the success may be due to the fact that people at the Medical Center are so busy with their specific jobs. The clinicians see the many needs of parents. They have worried about overall issues faced by families. But given the way clinical services are budgeted, they've only had the ability to treat the presenting problems and then make referrals to other agencies. To have someone come in and say, 'Look, we can do this,' has allowed them to extend their services. They've referred me to the people I've needed to talk to in various hospital departments and pointed me in the right direction.

"There's an overall board at the Medical Center that has to oversee activities just like the School Board. But we don't have any type of joint professional or parent advisory group. I'm not sure we ever will because politically and money-wise it could be a disaster if people really ever sat down together and talked about the relationship, it is just so unique. The hospital administrator with whom I work has had to craft some very creative funding arrangements and the hospital administration needs to be able to make their

own decisions using their own particular style. Because ECFE is part of the public schools, I find their decisions tend to be shared among more people and levels of the organization."

Collaborative arrangements are difficult to establish and many times do not endure over time (Hord, 1980). Given the mutability of the content, what appears to be an ideal system at one point may be a burden in the future (Louis and Rosenblum, 1981). Jolene Pearson highlighted a number of issues and lessons from her initial experience:

Overlapping interests. Bob Brancale received a mandate from the School Board to serve at-risk families and the resources to expand ECFE in new directions. Pearson remembered contacting Brancale and asking him if he had ever thought about doing a partnership with a medical facility. Other ECFE staff had recently returned from a conference in Philadelphia about a Family School-type program and were favorably impressed with the model for at-risk families.

According to Jolene Pearson, one motivation for the hospital to become involved in this arrangement is its location in the middle of a high-risk neighborhood. "Everyone in the city is feeling pressure to reach out to at-risk families, particularly because Minneapolis has always been a socially conscious city. The Medical Center must continually struggle with an image of being an ivory tower in an area with the highest infant mortality rate in the city. They see these families all the time in emergency services and in the clinic and feel committed to serve them.

"The hospital had a desire to develop a parent-infant program because they felt they had mental health services for preschoolers, older children, and family counseling and needed to address mental health issues with the very young. Sharing the cost of my position was initially attractive to them because I have background in infant development.

"Then the administrator of outpatient services and I went to Duluth to look at their Family School program. She was a social worker before becoming a hospital administrator, so she really has an understanding of the basic needs of parents. I think it was a good strategy to look at the program from each of our points of view. She looked at the program and saw how we could design it as an infant mental health service, which could be revenue-producing for the hospital by accessing third-party payments. I could see how the ECFE-type personnel could complement the mental health services, and be funded through the public schools. So it's a program that has evolved with a dual identity from the beginning -- even our brochure has both organizational logos on it."

Cost-sharing. Bob Brancale was initially supportive of co-funding Jolene Pearson's position because "It made sense as a partnership and the ECFE budget could not support another position at the time." The school system couldn't move fast enough to hire Pearson, so the hospital hired her, using their own pay scale. "I became a hospital employee," said Pearson, "except there was a written agreement that ECFE would cover half my salary and half of my benefits. It was unique for the Medical Center, because in order to serve all parents, I really needed to be involved with all the inpatient wards for children. It was unusual to have an employee who crossed all the inpatient-outpatient lines throughout various departments.

"The first year I was a hospital employee. For the last two years I've been a school employee. It turned out that educators are not as valued in a medical setting in terms of salary. I advocated to become a school employee because my salary scale is so much better. The hospital simply wrote a letter saying they would agree to pay the school district a portion of my salary [for the year]."

Structural issues. A number of structural issues must be considered in planning services. First, ECFE staff, even those working in Family School, tend to follow a school calendar. The hospital wanted to hire the ECFE staff to offer some specialized services during the summer but found people did not want to work under its salary structure. Second, Jolene Pearson has had to meet the reporting requirements of both organizations. She keeps statistics for ECFE one way and handles quality assurance reporting using the hospital's procedures. Third, accountability regarding funding is different. Jolene Pearson

explained: "The school district goes into the year with a budget. The hospital's budget is always dependent upon reimbursements for services provided throughout the year. Every month we find out how many units we're behind for service in Good Beginnings. ECFE people don't worry about having planning meetings if necessary. Staff at the hospital are not able to do that because they would know they were losing two units of therapy time. All this has worked out because we haven't tried to merge everything. We have our separate identities, separate modes of operation. Staff funded through ECFE still take time to plan and process, but we also stress contact hours with families."

Blending organizational cultures. "A lot of issues came out when we started mixing education and medical people," said Pearson. "The therapists knew they were going to do therapy with families and the ECFE staff had to figure out an expanded role. At first the educators deferred to the therapists and then felt bad for doing it because they ***did*** have ideas. People in medical settings tend to be confrontational and talk very direct, while the educators are more process and group oriented. The educators have needed to be more direct.

"We've done a lot of team development and I think we've been able to strike a balance. Now we have a team that's excited to be together and willing to challenge each other while seeing each other as valuable. Just recently I heard a therapist talking about how working in Family School has been a great experience because she is stretching herself clinically. She includes some of the early childhood teachers in her therapy sessions with children and their parent(s) because she sees it as complementing her work."

Admissions decisions. The decision-making process regarding what types of families to admit to the Family School program has evolved. "Initially," said Jolene Pearson, "the therapeutic staff felt obligated to accept very difficult cases. I think the educators felt obligated to go along. The first group of parents included a number of child protection referrals who we guessed might not be able to make it as parents, and we were right. Now we try to accept families who we believe have some hope of retaining custody of their children. Other families may be referred to individual therapy.

"Overall, I think there is now a high degree of mutual trust among staff regarding admissions. I've become very involved in the intake process so I can be a fence sitter and see it from both sides. The educational staff have learned it's okay to give feedback to the intake staff and to say they don't think it is working with a particular family."

Trust and risk taking. Funding for Jolene Pearson and the other ECFE staff through ECFE has not been a major issue. Obtaining funds for other aspects of the Family School program has not been as easy. "What happened at the hospital is that the administrator I was working with had counted on the County giving us a contract for day treatment for a certain number of clients. The hospital entered into the partnership thinking this would be arranged over the summer and we'd start in the fall. We had the referrals, but the program didn't start until November. I had the ECFE staff ready to go, so we shifted into doing home visiting. This was a godsend because staff had a chance to learn about the families and the complexity of their issues. Finally, the hospital administrator just crossed her fingers and hoped she'd be able to get a retroactive payment. She was willing to take a very big risk, I think primarily because she really believed in the program." Eventually the hospital was able to recover all of the funds that had been put into the program in the starting session.

Serving the Most At-Risk

The Family School program has added parent support and education to a therapeutic model of services. "I don't feel like we're going in the wrong direction," said Bob Brancale. "I think we walk a fine line even in our neighborhood ECFE classes in terms of what is support and what is therapy. It is certainly a therapeutic setting at Family School, but I don't see ECFE as the 'meat' of the program. I see us as one of the resources. Actually, I think it would be ideal if every family counseling unit around the city had a parent education component tied to it. In fact, during the pilot days, the child psychologist in

the suburban district I worked in was instrumental in changing my thinking about ECFE. He pointed out to me that he would refer families to ECFE not to get therapy, but just to be able to meet in a group with parents and realize that others are struggling too; none of us is 'all together.' Then it was easier for an ECFE person to refer the family on to counseling if it was necessary.

"To me, ECFE is a middle-of-the-road resource. I think some of my colleagues see ECFE as much more than it can be. We're a bridge, a conduit, the mortar to help parents keep their families together."

Structural Barriers to Year-Round Programming

"During the summer," said Bob Brancale, "we are only able to offer classes through agencies to families with many needs. Budget constraints and union guidelines necessitate our following a mostly academic calendar. According to the union guidelines, if they work beyond that, it has to be at an hourly rate and the work has to be significantly different from what they do during the regular school year. Otherwise, we would be required to extend their contracts, which is more costly than the hourly rate.

"Staff who want to work during the summer work under the community school coordinators as part of Community Education. The coordinators schedule parent-child activity classes during the summer and pay the staff at a Community Education hourly rate. Parents who participate in ECFE tend to sign up for the teachers they already know. The programming is really scaled down. It would take a major budget increase for us to think about year-round programming."

The Appropriate Role of the Advisory Council

The role of the ECFE advisory council is active, but the program is definitely under the administrative control of the school district. Bob Brancale highlighted how the councils have changed in Minneapolis since the pilot days. "I inherited a tri-board: an advisory council representing the three different pilot programs that were being merged into one under Community Education. Many program staff and advisory council members were angry with me, someone they saw as representative of the administration. I had to bring in an outside consultant to help me reformulate the council membership because their current by-laws had them firmly entrenched. They were concerned that a male who was working in ECFE in another district was displacing the three female ECFE coordinators from the pilot programs.

"Now we have reconfigured the council city-wide as a board to include some agency representatives and participating parents from each of the ECFE sites across the city. In addition, each regional center has its own council in which a majority of the members are participating parents. The board also includes a majority of participating parents and representatives from the agencies which have committed resources in some way. ECFE staff are involved in all councils as ad-hoc, non-voting members.

"The various councils and the city-wide board are involved at a grass-roots level. They get involved in planning such things as transportation, special programs, and special events. The city-wide advisory personnel committee has recently recommended that we co-fund a minority recruiter with St. Paul, a person who would just spend his or her time recruiting minority staff. But overall, I'd say the advisory councils are not as involved as during the pilot years when they dealt with funding cuts. Staff mobilized them to write letters and testify before the Legislature. Without a crisis, they're not really as involved as they could be. If we had a funding crisis, we could mobilize them in an instant. But funding is not a problem right now."

Funding Sources Control Ownership

"The Work and Family Center in downtown Minneapolis is a school district program," said Bob Brancale. "It is a resource. Most of the business people on the steering committee don't want to tell us how to run it. They want to help determine the needs and give feedback.

"We got off track for a while. One of the companies purchased the services of a consultant who proposed three particular management structures, including one that gave business much more control over program management. One proposal called for the Work and Family Center to be set up as a separate non-profit organization. That was something with which we just couldn't go along. As a result of dealing with these proposals, several members of the steering committee started getting frustrated. A six-member development sub-committee was set up to look at structural models. This committee recommended we remain under the school system. We've finally gotten back on track. We're going to have some type of informal arrangement with business."

The immediate goal is to keep the Work and Family Center located at the downtown location at the College of St. Thomas. Area business representatives -- primarily from human resource departments of their organizations -- are supportive of the Center but have not been asked to contribute financial resources or to release staff from their work duties to participate in activities. Because this initiative has only been operating a few months, it is much too soon to tell what, if any, effect the Work and Family Center will have on the downtown business community.

What Licensing Can and Cannot Do

Bob Brancale chaired the ECFE statewide task force that proposed two new licensure areas to the Board of Teaching. "There were two particular issues with which we dealt. First, the prerequisites we proposed don't really limit people to certain backgrounds. In other words, the person doesn't have to have an early childhood or elementary education background to get a parent educator license. A variety of degrees are acceptable. People can have a background in family counseling, social work, nursing or education.

"Secondly, this is an educational license. Staff shouldn't be doing therapeutic types of things. We walk a fine line between offering group support and doing group therapy. It's a blurred area that is never going to be clear because ECFE does get called upon to get involved with child custody issues and court referrals. But basically, ECFE needs to stay out of the therapeutic realm. Our main job is to be there to educate and support parents."

When asked about ECFE staff being adequately prepared to work with social service referrals and to be home visits targeted to at risk families, Brancale replied, "I don't know how you prepare people for working in a program like Minneapolis's where there is such a diversity of needs. Preservice training won't do it all. When I started in teaching, I wasn't prepared. I learned on the job with support from my colleagues. If you look at the lead staff here in Minneapolis, they're products of the pilot years. They all were out in the trenches at one time. Now they have the role of supporting others who are just starting. But I think it is a mission impossible to expect parent educators to be able to integrate at-risk families into their groups unless that ongoing support and training is there for staff." Currently, 12 ECFE staff work as teachers on special assignment and are responsible for individual program development, inservice, outreach, and other support services. Overall, the program supports approximately 70 parent and early childhood educators on a part-time basis (under 25 hours per week).

"I think we're way ahead of the rest of the country," said Brancale, "but we still have a lot to learn. Parent education is our greatest training need statewide and it's going to take a lot of trial and error, new service delivery models, and inservice regardless of what is required for licensure."

Children and Families in a Complex Urban Environment

"Minneapolis is lucky," said Karen Kurz-Riemer. "Its public school and city problems don't match the severity of those problems in many other larger cities. The strong progressive tradition in the city and the state has led to the growth of many types of agencies and services for families. ECFE is one of many of the services available in the city." A partial listing of the existing services for families of young children, prepared by Kurz-Riemer, named 27 organizations that provided prenatal and preventive health care; 15 agencies that provided transportation to community services; 10 agencies (including ECFE) that included home visits as part of their services; at least 36 organizations (including ECFE) that provided parent education and support services; at least 11 screening and/or assessment centers; four drop-in centers for parents and children; 33 therapeutic services (including Family School) for parents and/or children; and seven agencies that provided individual family service planning and case management (including Family School).

City-wide planning groups and coalitions, many operating with planning grants from area foundations, have tied early child development to school success, to the remediation of long-term unemployment in the city, and to the reduction of public costs associated with unemployment. The Minneapolis Community Business Employment Alliance, made up of representatives of business, labor, and the schools, and chaired by Mayor Frazer, produced a report in 1985 containing recommendations to "improve the future employability of low-income Minneapolis children ages 0 to 5 by providing high-quality early childhood development services." The United Way has recently brought a number of corporate leaders, the city government, and the schools together to discuss what the community needs to do to have the city's children be successful by age six. The Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board (MYCB), created in 1985 as a joint powers agreement among the city, the public schools, Hennepin County, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, and the Public Library Board, has as its purpose "to maximize developmental opportunities for children and youth (ages 0-20) residing in Minneapolis." The MYCB has issued a number of reports including *The City's Children in 2007; Three Plus;* and *Way to Grow.*

Bob Brancale has been involved in some way with a number of these groups and said, "We're working toward the same goals, and a lot of people have been on the same committees. The interesting thing is that no one is trying to beat out the other groups." At the same time, as these reports call for the creation and funding of new structures to coordinate services in Minneapolis, the tensions begin to show. Existing organizations including the public schools, county social services, and public health, are not yet ready to give up control of their resources or their perceived mandates (even if there is overlap). As yet, the city of Minneapolis remains in the report stage of any major initiatives to realign services for families with young children.

St. Paul Public Schools

Community Education & Early Childhood Family Education: "Our current approaches to ECFE came out of the parent education activities funded through adult homemaking under adult vocational education and the CQE pilot sites. Community Education has always been supportive of parent education. Prior to the levy, we relied very heavily on funds from Community Education to initiate sites in addition to the CQE pilot programs."

Verne M. Melberg, Assistant Director of Family Education

Setting

St. Paul, the capital of Minnesota, is located east of Minneapolis, just across the Mississippi River. Currently the second largest city in the state (approximately 267,000 residents), its population has declined an estimated 15 percent since 1960.

St. Paul has always been known as a city of identifiable neighborhoods with strong ethnic roots. Poorer immigrants moved into one neighborhood and then moved to another part of the city (or to the suburbs) as they or their progeny prospered, a pattern still evident today.

The city is the most ethnically and racially diverse in the state, with a significant black population (10 percent of the total population), the largest Hispanic population in the state (5 percent), and a recent influx (currently 8 percent) of Southeast Asians (primarily Hmong, Vietnamese, and Cambodian). These most recent immigrant groups have found their way into five public housing complexes and apartments located throughout the city; some have now purchased homes. Representatives of the Southeast Asian community cite tremendous social adjustment problems: domestic violence (mostly in the Hmong community), chemical abuse, marital conflict, generational gaps as the young people acculturate too fast, child abuse, and a lingering sense of hopelessness and depression.

However, a tradition of strong ties to the clan have fostered a mutual support system within the community. Many Southeast Asian adults are pursuing vocational training and continuing in higher education, enabling them to move into full-time employment. School staff report that the parents support, and are very interested in, the education of their children. As a result, the children are motivated to succeed.

In the recent years, St. Paul has experienced a revitalization of its downtown and other smaller commercial and residential areas. Economic activity is currently wide-ranging, including government, manufacturing, health care, high technology, and insurance. Median family income in 1984, at $28,798, was relatively high. In 1987, unemployment averaged just under five percent. However, St. Paul has not escaped the nationwide experience of plant closings, layoffs, and slow growth in the construction and trade sectors, making blue-collar jobs harder to find.

The St. Paul public schools enrolled 31,624 students during 1987-88. With a 36 percent minority enrollment, the schools are even more diverse than the city. The district currently operates under a voluntary desegregation plan, offering students a number of magnet and alternative school programs. Lyle Swanson, the director of Community Education, noted that St. Paul has a "very strong Catholic school system as well."

Community Education in St. Paul

The department of Community Education was initiated in 1972. Since then the program has grown to include activities and services in the following major areas:

- adult literacy, including adult basic education, an adult high school diploma program, GED classes and testing, ESL, educational television and classes for adults to "brush up on their basic skills";
- special programs, including driver education (in all high schools and city-wide for adults) and programs for adults with handicaps (including mental illness, mental retardation, visual impairments, and learning disabilities);
- general programs including enrichment and recreation activities; and
- family education.

In addition, Community Education works actively with area businesses, private non-profit organizations, and various school organizations to coordinate services. One example is the community resource program, which recruits and trains volunteers who provide orientations to the various K-12 programs in St. Paul. Another example is the placement of a skills enhancement center (GED preparation) at a factory site.

Community Education is unique in St. Paul because of its particularly strong working relationships with the Department of Recreation, as part of the city of St. Paul, and the St. Paul Technical Institute. "A majority of our Community Education recreation supervisors are actually city employees," said Lyle Swanson. "Fifty percent of their salaries are paid through Community Education, and have been for many years.

"The Technical Institute is administered through the public schools in St. Paul. We have always had a strong relationship with them in the provision of family education and support services. So, when additional state and local funds became available for ECFE, we were able to expand in a number of areas and use these funds to focus on parents with preschool age children."

Currently, family education includes a number of programming areas. Major program areas supported all, or in part, with ECFE funds include: ECFE parent-child classes at 15 neighborhood sites; Family Living in America for recent immigrants and refugees; work and family education; and special family events. Activities that operate under family education independent of ECFE, include: parent education and support for parents of school-age children; a training program for child-care workers; and before- and after-school child care for children ages four through 12. These program areas rely primarily on user fees and funds through adult vocational education.

During 1987-88 the total budget for Community Education was $5.5 million (including ECFE). The budget is expected to increase during 1988-1989. According to Swanson, the program derives its revenue from the following sources: local levies (50 percent), state aid (30 percent), fees and charges (12 percent), grants (5 percent), and county or municipal funds (3 percent).

Program Philosophy

Senator Jerome Hughes, the sponsor of the ECFE legislation, has long been affiliated with the St. Paul public schools as the first Community Education supervisor/consultant. A staff member from the first ECFE pilot sites in St. Paul remembers Senator Hughes being actively involved in the development of this program and watching with interest as the programming evolved through the early years. There is little doubt that the current philosophy of ECFE in the district has been strongly influenced by the early bonds with Community Education and adult vocational education.

The statement of philosophy for ECFE in St. Paul reads:

> We believe that the family is the first and most important influence on the development of the child. Early Childhood Family Education seeks to support and strengthen families through information, education, and networking. We acknowledge the uniqueness of each family, the diversity among families, and seek to respond to the different needs of families. Every parent is valued and supported in their growth as parents and each child is accepted as a unique individual and encouraged to learn and develop in their own way.

History

Family support and education services have a long history in the public schools in St. Paul. As early as 1954, staff from the adult homemaking program, as part of adult vocational home economics education, offered sessions to parents in their homes while babysitters cared for the children. In 1963, classes for parents began in apartments in public housing projects; children participated in special children's programs at the community centers of the projects. College students and nurses provided staffing for the children's component. Later, the district employed certified nursery school teachers to provide this service. In 1974, the public schools began cooperating with a number of area hospitals to initiate classes for expectant parents.

These early efforts, as part of the adult vocational education program in the district, continued to grow under the direction of Patricia Hatteberg. In 1974, St. Paul received funding through CQE to initiate one of the first ECFE pilot sites at a neighborhood elementary school. In 1977, Verne Melberg was hired as a parent and family education specialist through adult vocational education and Community Education. Over the next two years she helped to open programs at a number of public school sites. Two more ECFE pilot sites were added between 1978 and 1980. Throughout this period, adult vocational education and Community Education funds were used to support the ECFE sites. Lyle Swanson remembered "We put a few hundred thousand dollars into ECFE before the legislation went statewide. We've always seen it as a basic program that could make a difference in the community and put some substance into our Community Education program -- give it some validity." Pat Hatteberg was the district supervisor of the ECFE pilot sites, but remembered these programs "operated more autonomously. The staff related to the local principals, the state (CQE), as well as to me."

In 1984, statewide legislation permitted districts to levy for ECFE funds. "St. Paul was ready," said Lyle Swanson. "We went full force immediately and were able to shift funding for all our parent education activities to ECFE and adult vocational education." ECFE was able to expand programming dramatically in existing sites and to add a few new programs. "Sites that had been offering two or three parent-child classes per week were able to expand to nine or more classes," said Verne Melberg, the assistant director of family education.

Program Characteristics

Services

Currently, services in St. Paul are provided through a widely dispersed network of 15 neighborhood centers (two of these centers are housed in the same facility). The centers are located in five elementary schools; four community centers and apartments of public housing complexes; two junior high schools; one church facility; a day-care center; and one school building now used for special community programs.

The parent and child classes meet 1-1/2 or two hours a week for three 11-week terms during the regular school year. Classes are scheduled throughout the day, evening, and some Saturday hours for mixed ages of children: the family may bring all children from birth to kindergarten age. A few sites focus classes on particular age groups (e.g., two-year-olds, 2-1/2- to three-year-olds, four-year-olds) or types of

parents (e.g., single parents, teen parents, fathers, and parents who are hearing impaired -- offered with interpreter services). Fees range from $20 to $25 and are easily paid on an installment basis or waived if the family cannot afford to pay.

The classes tend to follow a similar format: during the first 30 minutes parents and their children participate in music, art, and a variety of learning activities arranged by the early childhood staff; parents then meet with a parent educator to discuss topics related to parenting while their children separate by age group and participate in developmentally appropriate activities supervised by early childhood teachers and teacher aides. (Sibling care may be provided in classes that focus on particular age groups of children.) Parents rejoin their children for a closing song.

Each neighborhood site offers a book-lending library and activity kits that may be taken home, as well as two to three special events per quarter. Special events are scheduled based on the interests of parents and children and have included field trips (e.g., to the public library, nature centers, public pools) and family events (e.g., ethnic dinners, picnics).

The St. Paul ECFE program offers, and is also involved in providing on a partnership basis, a number of specialized programs:

Home Based Parent Support and Education, provided two afternoons a week to parents whose children attend a day-care center located at the Children's Home Society. This program serves primarily single and minority parents.

Family Living in America is a program for Southeast Asian parents (primarily Hmong and Cambodian) and their young children. The class format is the same as at the neighborhood sites, but the emphasis of the parent activities is on understanding the American culture as it relates to: the family, raising children, and improving language skills. Parents are also exposed to consumer areas of family living, including food, clothing, and housing. Interpreters are provided at most of these classes.

Classes that focus on family living are scheduled at the four neighborhood centers located in the public housing complexes. Other neighborhood centers may target one to three classes per week to particular new immigrant groups (e.g., Hmong or Cambodian). These classes are all offered at no cost to the parents. Some transportation is provided by ECFE.

The Working Parent Resource Center grew out of a two-year foundation grant awarded to Community Education in 1985 to offer noon-time seminars to parents working in downtown St. Paul. The resource center was added in 1986. Currently, the WPRC is co-sponsored by ECFE, Adult Vocational Education, and the Vocational Education Work and Family Institute through the State Board of Vocational Technical Education. Corporate sponsors have donated space for the resource center and five additional downtown locations used for noon-time seminars.

Parents may use the center in any or all of the following ways:

- free individual consultation with a parent educator by phone or in person at the center;
- use of magazines, pamphlets, and a library of books and videotapes from free check-out (topics include choosing child care, stress and time management, parenting and child development; and
- noon-time (45 minute) seminars offered by parent educators. Seminars vary in length from special one session events to four-, six-, and 10-week sessions. Fees range from $2 to $20 depending upon the number of sessions. Scholarships are available.

Seminar topics cover particular developmental stages of children (e.g., becoming a more confident parent of a toddler; living with preteen/teens) and parenting situations (e.g., fathering today; single

parenting). A number of special topics are also offered each term (e.g., backpacking with children; dual career couples; balancing family and career; discipline and self esteem). Because funding comes from both ECFE and adult vocational education, parent educators are able to address parenting of children of all ages.

The Payne-Phalen Family Support Project is a new initiative of ECFE and the St. Paul Technical Institute Extension with involvement of Ramsey County Public Health and the Payne-Phalen Ad Hoc Committee of Early Education (District 5). Funding is through a three-year grant from an area foundation. Initial interest for the project came from the elementary school principal and a community organizer in District 5, who wanted to start a home visiting program to promote better school readiness. When ECFE staff members became involved in the planning, they pointed out that parent-child classes already existed in the district. The project therefore shifted to a comprehensive approach, combining home visiting, small neighborhood groups, and a Family Resource Center in order to help low-income parents access systems of informal and formal support within their neighborhood community. The following types of services will be coordinated through the project:

- health visits by Ramsey County Public Health nurses with referrals to ECFE for additional services;
- home visits by specially trained ECFE home visitors who will provide information and support for parenting and help parents provide educational activities for their children within the home;
- small neighborhood groups of parents and children (parents will discuss parenting concerns, project staff will provide information and support);
- a Family Resource Center in the community where parents and children can come to play and learn together; and
- encouragement of parents and children to participate in ECFE at a neighborhood school located at the edge of District 5.

Participants

Participation in ECFE has increased gradually during the past two years. In 1986-87, ECFE served a total of 3,250 different parents and 3,500 children (an estimated 17 percent of the eligible population in the city). Of the parents served, an estimated 27 percent were low-income, 10 percent were single parents, and less than one percent (37) were teen parents. An anonymous survey of ECFE participants (69 percent responding) conducted in the spring of 1987 indicated that:

- 90 percent were female;
- 22 percent had less than a high school education;
- 42 percent were employed full- or part-time;
- 30 percent were minorities; and
- 39 percent first learned about ECFE from a friend or neighbor.

In 1987-88, 3,707 different parents participated in a class or special event (the number decreases to 2,841 when special events are excluded). A total of 3,953 children participated in a class or special event (18 percent of the eligible population). The proportion of parents from low-income households increased to 38 percent. Single parents accounted for 13 percent of the participants and teen parents represented two percent (60). A similar anonymous survey of ECFE participants (72 percent responding) conducted in the spring of 1988 yielded the following profile of participants:

- 91 percent were female;
- 21 percent had a high school education;
- 42 percent were employed full- or part-time;
- 24.7 percent were minorities; and
- 46 percent first learned about ECFE from a friend or neighbor.

Curriculum

The curriculum and materials used with children and parents vary tremendously across the neighborhood sites. Staff members have access to a resource center of books and materials at the ECFE administrative office. ECFE staff are responsible for completing planning forms for parent-child interaction, parent education, and early childhood education activities planned for each session. These forms are filed together at the program site and may be reviewed as part of staff evaluations.

Activities for children stress appropriate development including cognitive, social-emotional, physical, and language development.

At the beginning of a series of sessions, the parent educator may ask parents to indicate an interest in particular topics. The range of materials and approaches used in ECFE is most apparent in the parent support and education component. For example, a parent educator at the Mt. Airy Homes Program meeting with a group of Hmong mothers might spend half the period helping them complete a basic data collection form required by the SDE and the other half teaching them how to attach a stretch collar to a t-shirt using a sewing machine. Parents at one neighborhood site may listen to information presented by a parent educator who projects an outline of the materials onto a screen; parents at another neighborhood site may each share a significant family experience that occurred during the week and talk openly about their own attitudes regarding their child's curiosity about the human body and sex.

Coordination with the Public Schools

ECFE has been built into a cluster of services referred to as family education, which gives it strong linkages to both Community Education and vocational education.

ECFE staff have focused on making information about ECFE available to other departments in the public schools, including the preschool screening team, early childhood special education, the school health clinics, elementary principals, and the secondary principals. Currently, ECFE offers parent education activities on an itinerant basis to: 1) adolescent parents attending high school; and 2) parents whose children receive services through early childhood special education.

ECFE currently utilizes classroom space in a number of school buildings, but ECFE funds are used to cover the expenses related to this use and to provide limited bus transportation for some participants.

Linkage to the Surrounding Community

ECFE staff members in St. Paul have emphasized outreach efforts in an attempt to recruit a cross-section of eligible families. Efforts over the last year have included the mailing of printed ECFE materials and presentations to the following community organizations:

- education-related groups, including Head Start and the educational administration of the Archdiocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis;
- church-related councils and community services;
- health-related groups including public health, hospitals, community and mental health clinics;
- social service agencies, including human services agencies and family service organizations;
- ethnic organizations representing the Southeast Asian community and the Native American community; and
- court-related groups, including juvenile services and Ramsey County corrections.

ECFE is also becoming involved in a growing number of cooperative arrangements in order to reach families considered at-risk. Specifically:

- ECFE is participating in a three-year demonstration project initiated by the Wilder Foundation to promote better parenting practices using an interdisciplinary approach with high-risk families. The Parent Outreach Project (POP) combines resources of the Wilder Foundation, Ramsey County Public Health Nursing Services, Ramsey County Social Services-Volunteer Services, and ECFE. Major funding for the initiative comes through a Maternal and Child Health Block Grant. Public health nurses identify families for participation in the project during their regular home visits. These families are screened and a risk assessment is completed. Families receive either standard public health nursing services or a neighborhood team approach that coordinates standard services with a trained volunteer home visitor called a parent befriender. Ideally, this individual lives in the community and tries to function as friend, role model, parent advocate, and a link to formal and informal community services (including ECFE).

- ECFE cooperates with the St. Paul Children's Hospital to offer a class for young mothers (14 to 25 years of age). The hospital provides space, equipment, and $2,000 in funding toward the class. ECFE provides staff time for the class and handles publicity and recruitment.

- The parent educator/lead teacher at each neighborhood site spends approximately three hours per week on a project with the volunteer services division of Ramsey County Human Services to prevent child maltreatment and promote family strengths.

- ECFE subcontracts the use of classroom space and provides an early childhood teacher to Lao Family Services for parents enrolled in English classes. One class during the week is an ECFE class for the parents.

Funding

The total ECFE budget during 1986-1987 was $1,988,592. The budget increased to $2,137,391 for 1987-1988. Major sources of revenue included the local levy (48 percent) and state aid (43 percent). Fees, the fund balance from previous years, and state reimbursement for teacher retirement and FICA accounted for the remaining eight percent.

St. Paul levied the maximum allowable under the legislation early and invested in the expansion of the neighborhood sites. Verne Melberg felt that "Future growth of the ECFE program in St. Paul will be directly related to the receipt of special grant funding (i.e., three-year foundation funding for the Payne-Phalen Family Support Project) and changes made by the Legislature regarding state aid and the amount a district can levy for ECFE. We are also trying to maximize our reimbursement for parent education activities through adult vocational education by maintaining minimum enrollment quotas in classes at the neighborhood sites."

Lessons from this Site

Hiring Practices

"The full-time ECFE staff in St. Paul," said Lyle Swanson, "have been on the master contract from day one. It never occurred to us that they wouldn't be or that they would be treated any differently than regular school staff. To me, it is a matter of legitimacy. This program will never be a legitimate part of the district unless ECFE staff are on equal standing with the staff in other educational programming."

During 1987-88, St. Paul employed one full-time coordinator; 37 full-time and 28 part-time professional staff; and 89 part-time paraprofessional staff through ECFE. Additional staff were employed with other sources of funds. Expenses related to staffing are thus tied to the wage scale set through the master contract (the base salary for a bachelor's level teacher was $19,868 in 1987-88) and account for a

large proportion of the ECFE budget from year to year. It is very doubtful that this arrangement would be possible if the program relied exclusively on fees. At the same time, future growth of the program is constrained because these salaries must be covered from year to year in order to maintain the current levels of services in the neighborhood sites.

Reaching A Cross-Section of Families

"It's easy to forget that St. Paul has been involved on an interagency basis with the city for a number of years in order to serve low-income families living in the public housing projects," said Ron Gustafson, the community coordinator for ECFE. "We're finding, though, that we still must be more creative in our outreach and come up with alternative delivery systems in order to reach and serve a cross-section of our families.

"At the most basic level, we need to find out who these families are and where they live. We can get a listing of live births from the legal register of the city, but it does not list births to single parents. Therefore, we had to start working with the public health nurses and the St. Paul Public Health Department who have contact with these families. We have developed a brochure with a tear-off return card that the Public Health Department will distribute. If a parent fills out and returns the card we will have a staff person from the neighborhood site closest to the home follow-up with a phone call. We have also increased the use of non-print media and outreach by staff to reach a broader audience."

District-wide publicity efforts have included advertisements in bus shelters, color posters and brochures, public service announcements on television and radio, the sale of ECFE shirts, and the mailing of information about ECFE to all AFDC recipients. Special efforts undertaken by ECFE staff members and parent volunteers include door-to-door recruitment in neighborhoods, presentations at kindergarten round-up and school open houses, and the distribution of special flyers by parent volunteers. ECFE staff are now offering activities at WIC nutrition clinics. Parents who leave their name, address, and phone number are then contacted by a staff from the neighborhood site closest to their home.

"We also have a goal of making agencies and organizations in the community more aware of ECFE," said Gustafson. "We want them to accurately understand what we do -- that we are not day care and not just for problem families. Also we need to find out what they do and where we can work together. It is a slow process to make these linkages. Turf issues do exist." Gustafson offered Head Start as an example. "We are just beginning discussions with Head Start. The director of this program is now on our advisory council and is very supportive. But just last year a few Head Start instructors in one neighborhood were very concerned that if parents became involved with ECFE once a week, that would be it: parents would not make the effort to get their children to Head Start. So you see, we have to move slowly and network in order to establish supportive relationships.

"Once we make the connection with an agency or organization, many times ECFE staff end up providing parent education classes on an itinerant basis. Sometimes the agency is able to underwrite part of the salary for the parent educator. But sometimes the weekly contact is not going to be enough. We are now working with the teen parent program offered through the public schools in order to develop a parent education component. They would like us to offer something on a daily basis. We can do that, but it will take a lot of planning to put together a curriculum that fits in with what they are already doing in the program."

Dealing with Resource Constraints

The St. Paul ECFE program is in the difficult situation of attempting to expand enrollment to improve services for a cross-section of families in the city when all ECFE revenue through the local

levy/state aid is already allocated to the neighborhood sites. Future increases in funding can come only with adjustments to the levy by the legislature.

Verne Melberg describes the current situation as a double bind. "We have established minimum enrollment quotas for our classes at the neighborhood sites in order to maximize our reimbursements through adult vocational education. At the same time we are trying to attract and serve at-risk families, so we must be flexible in certain sites because we know these families do not function well in large groups. Another issue I must keep in the back of my mind is that we could easily lose our space in the public school buildings if we don't demonstrate full enrollments and efficient use of the rooms."

An ECFE task force, convened in the fall of 1986 to look at ways to improve services and increase participation of parents and children with special needs, called for stepped-up recruitment, some modifications in existing programs, and the provision of staff development regarding special needs families. At the same time, it acknowledged the need for 1) supplemental funding to cover additional costs of involving hard-to-reach families, 2) an entirely new program for some types of parents, and 3) assistance and more involvement in cooperative programming with other agencies and organizations in the community.

Planning and Program Development

The ECFE program administration established a special needs task force in the fall of 1986 in response to a district-wide initiative called *Strategies for Excellence and Equity.* "I think the ECFE staff took their charge very seriously," said Gail Roberts, a consultant in program evaluation. "They used it as an opportunity to look at ways to improve services and increase the participation of parents and children with special needs who were underserved by existing programs. I'm impressed that this task force was initiated less than two years after the expansion of the neighborhood sites.

"I think that programs in the state have all felt an initial pressure to serve as many eligible families as possible. The program has been successful at serving a large number of families. The next challenge is serving all types of families, including those with special needs. We've learned in the process that much more intensive outreach and personalized one-to-one contact is needed to reach and serve the family with special needs. So there is an ongoing tension of reaching as many families as possible and reaching and serving the families with special needs that has real implications for an ECFE budget. In St. Paul there are some neighborhood sites which are overflowing and have waiting lists. Staff at other sites must do intensive outreach each term in order to reach certain families. The ECFE program needs to develop a policy and approaches for opening more classes to address the overflow and continuing with the outreach.

"We are also seeing a need for different models of service for families with special needs. The scheduled class format may not work for everyone and it is a costly method for delivering services. We're hoping through the Payne-Phalen Family Support Project to learn more about the kinds of families who will participate in a more informal setting that is less structured and hopefully fits better into their lives. We want to see if this approach to services will help families with special needs access the other resources that they may need.

"As I look around the state, I see that only the larger programs have the resources to look at alternatives. It takes staff time just to identify the types of families who are under-served and to monitor or evaluate the effectiveness of alternative approaches to service. Further, we know that this is something ECFE cannot do alone. Staff time must be devoted to forming interagency relationships to offer support and education to these families. Finally, at this point in St. Paul, the initiation of the Payne-Phalen project would not have been possible without foundation funding. Beyond giving us the needed financial resources [$440,000 over three years], we will be able to try a model that uses paraprofessionals as home visitors. These staff will be supervised by an ECFE staff member. We could not hire unlicensed personnel with ECFE funds under the current legislative guidelines."

The Payne-Phalen Family Support Project will be initiated "in a poorer neighborhood clearly in transition," on the lower east side of St. Paul, explained Gail Roberts. "It is a very transient area that has not recovered from a plant closing almost 10 years ago. A number of the storefronts are boarded up. The assistant principal at a local neighborhood school told me he was having trouble finding one family around the perimeter of the school yard who would volunteer their home as a 'safe house.' That tells me the neighbors are even afraid of each other.

"When we think about evaluation of the project, a number of levels must be considered. This is a service demonstration project and we have tried to state realistic outcomes that are achievable during the next three years. Overall, we were heavily influenced by an ecological view of the family in the neighborhood and the community."

The stated outcomes for the project do not mention very long term effects (e.g., reductions in placements of children in special education or reduction in delinquency) or even changes in family situations (e.g., employment status of parents). Rather, the outcomes reflect the goal of helping families build other forms of support for themselves. Specific outcomes for which measures will be developed include:

1. An increase in the number of low-income parents with a young child in the Payne-Phalen area who receive parenting information and support a one-to-one basis.

2. An increase in the ability of the parent to recognize developmental needs of the child and to provide educational experiences for the child in the home.

3. An increase in the number and types of informal and formal social support used by the family.

4. An increase in participation by families in other parent-child activities, experiences with other families with young children and in the number of referrals to other community resources.

5. An increase in participation of low-income parents in ongoing programs in the community that provide parenting information, support and education for parents and young children (e.g. ECFE, Head Start).

6. An increase in the perception of the neighborhood and community as a place that cares about, and is supportive of, children and families.

Duluth Public Schools

Community Education & Early Childhood Family Education: "I'm positioned under the Director of Elementary Education, under the superintendent. Personally it's a better fit for me. I think we're taken more seriously. I'm on par with principals. I'm the supervisor of a building. I attend principals' meetings. I think it's made the Department of Instruction take early childhood education seriously, because they've had to deal with it."

Marilyn Larson, ECFE Supervisor

Setting

Duluth is the fourth largest city in Minnesota, serving as the major metropolitan area for northeastern Minnesota and northwestern Wisconsin. Duluth stretches along the shore of Lake Superior, 23 miles in length and six miles wide. As one moves away from the waterfront, the elevation rises sharply from 605 feet to 1485 feet above sea level, offering breathtaking views of the city and Lake Superior from the higher points.

The Port of Duluth-Superior, located at the western terminus of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway System, ranks among the top dozen ports in the U.S. in total volume. Grain is currently the primary export commodity. Duluth-Superior features some of the largest grain shipping accommodations in the world. The steel, timber -- and therefore shipping -- industries are depressed; the largest single employer in Duluth is the public schools.

The city's population of 83,065 (1987 estimate) is stratified east to west. The West End is a blue-collar, working-class neighborhood; Central Hillside, offering some of the best views of Lake Superior, is a neighborhood of low-income families, many of whom are transient and on welfare; the East End is a neighborhood of professional, often dual-income families, and the strongest base for ECFE. The old estates on the shores of Lake Superior in the East End attest to the once booming economy of the area. Like much of Minnesota, Duluth is home to a racially homogenous population: 97 percent are white; 1.4 percent are Native American; .8 percent black; .6 percent Asian and others. Overall, the population of the city has been declining -- an estimated 22 percent since 1960.

Duluth is the seat of St. Louis County and houses the offices of the County Social Services and Health Department. The city is a major center for medical services. One of the five campuses of the University of Minnesota is located in Duluth, as are the College of St. Scholastica, Duluth Business University, and a Technical Institute administered by the public schools in cooperation with the State Board for Vocational-Technical Education.

Program Goals and Philosophy

The goal of ECFE in Duluth is to enhance self-esteem, confidence, and feelings of competence in parents; to empower parents to become advocates for their children's medical, educational, and social-service needs; and to strengthen families to enable them to meet the developmental needs of their children.

By empowerment, Marilyn Larson means that "We look at parents as partners, or as equals, even in including them in the design of the program and the ongoing setting of goals. We take our parent advisory committees at neighborhood sites and our [district-wide] advisory council seriously. The idea is that all families have strengths. Our job is to try to build on those strengths and to create an environment and an atmosphere where personal growth is desirable, and where it's viewed as possible. We worry less

about child-rearing techniques and parents needing and wanting to do parent-child activities with their kids. We worry more -- pay more attention to -- people feeling comfortable, talking straight with each other, hitting on difficult issues. We're willing to tackle anything that anybody wants to talk about, not in a therapeutic way, but in a values clarification kind of way. I think that's why programs in general in Minnesota don't use canned curricula, because canned curricula almost always have information they want to *impart* to parents. I think parent educators see themselves much more as a consultant to a group, much less a teacher."

History

Duluth is home to one of 12 original pilot sites funded by the Legislature and developed through the Council on Quality Education (CQE) in 1977. A second pilot site began operating in Duluth in 1979. Marilyn Larson was hired by the district to develop the pilot sites and then left after a few years to do other things. The two original sites, located in the West End neighborhood, served about 200 low-income families a year during the pilot years. Larson recalls that "The year we knew that we were going to get expanded monies, I was hired back as a consultant through the vocational system to help area school districts set up their ECFE programs, because no other district in northeastern Minnesota had had a pilot. In my role as a consultant, I was asked to be on the Steering Committee in Duluth to plan for city-wide expansion of ECFE and to chair the program development part." The Steering Committee was chaired by the assistant superintendent and included elementary school principals, parents, and representatives from various school departments concerned with young children, Community Education, Public Health, Social Services, Vocational Education, the University of Minnesota.

Larson used her experience in the pilot sites to say to the Committee, "'Here are the kinds of families we were easily able to serve at those sites, and here are the families with whom we didn't have such good luck.'" Under CQE, every single program served one elementary attendance area. "You had a very small amount of money, the grants never went much more than $35-45,000 per site in all the years they were here. The most we could diversify in those neighborhood sites was to do a single parents' group, and we did some couples' groups. That meant that we had to offer a universal program and try to make our outreach techniques as sensitive as possible to bringing in people as they appeared in the population."

Larson remembers explaining, "'If we're going to continue with the premise that CQE required, that we try to serve people as they appear in the population, here are the people that we didn't serve. They are first-time parents of infants. Usually the impetus to participate in ECFE begins anywhere from when that child is 14-24 months . Another was what we've now become used to calling multiple-stress families. If there are too many stressors going on in a family, they don't seem to seek out group experiences and things to do in the community. Then there were some groups for whom our regular service delivery did not seem enough, or was not sensitive enough to their needs. For instance, it doesn't seem to work real well to try to integrate single parents into a group because their issues are so different. Mildly retarded parents don't function as well in a neighborhood group. The kinds of choices that are being offered are probably not concrete enough for these parents. [Native American] Indian parents didn't seem to want to integrate.' Since then, we've been finding that's not always true. But at that time we thought maybe we should do groups for Indian parents. So, we began to identify groups like that who shared some sort of life experience, history, or culture; something that made it more comfortable for them to meet together than to try to integrate them into neighborhood sites. So, that's how we decided to diversify. We had a large enough budget to be able to do that. We went from a $90,000 pilot budget to $565,000 in one year."

The Steering Committee recommended to the School Board in January of 1985 that a core program be developed at seven neighborhood sites. In addition, a variety of models and approaches were recommended to reach families for whom the neighborhood concept was either not comprehensive enough, or did not address their specific needs. Many of the approaches that have since found their way into reality in Duluth should be credited to Marilyn Larson.

There was some opposition internally regarding where the program would be housed. Larson explained the background: "Our district for several years had employed the category of early childhood teacher through the pilot programs. The pilots were located in the Department of Instruction. We're also the only district in the state that runs a Head Start program. So there was a long history of having early childhood teachers on contract and having them be part of the bargaining unit in the Department of Instruction. When the switch was made from CQE to Community Education, there were some internal struggles about what that would mean for ECFE." Barbara Schwartz, a ECFE program development specialist, remembered that "ECFE staff favored remaining under elementary education because it was more attractive for teachers to be on the teacher contract. The district couldn't have contract teachers under Community Education when everyone else in Community Education is paid by an hourly rate with no benefits." The final decision was that ECFE would stay where it had originally been placed. "We have avoided a lot of the contractual issues that other programs in the state are facing, being somewhat foreign in Community Education because of the contract and licensure issues," said Larson.

In 1985, Larson became the ECFE supervisor in Duluth and also assumed administrative responsibilities for the Head Start program and Habitat, a comprehensive program for teen parents attending high school.

Program Characteristics

Services

A distinctive feature of ECFE in Duluth is the idea of varying models of service, and targeting services within a particular model to meet parents' needs. In 1987-88, major program components included the following:

Neighborhood Centers. Seven Centers are located across the city. Three utilize dedicated space in elementary schools; two are located in church-affiliated facilities; one rents space in a former public school building now owned by a hospital; and one is located in a school building dedicated to early childhood programs.

Programs are offered on a quarterly basis during the school year. The first quarter is free for families; after that a $30 fee is requested, but easily waived for those who cannot afford to pay. Classes are offered Monday through Thursday, with 80 percent being scheduled during the morning and early afternoon hours (Fridays are reserved for staff meetings and preparation). Each Center usually offers evening classes one or two nights a week. Classes are scheduled either by developmental ages of children, or for mixed age groups. Sibling care is provided. Some classes are targeted for special groups including: single parents, fathers, parents with children enrolled in Head Start, parents of medically vulnerable children, parents of young children with developmental disabilities, and parents who are disabled.

Each of the Centers structures its sessions in a similar manner: 1) a time for parents to spend with their children in child-centered activities; and 2) a time for parent discussion, led by a parent facilitator, during which children remain in a play environment carefully arranged by an early childhood teacher. Each Center has a toy- and book-lending library. Staff work actively throughout the year with parents to plan special events both for parents and for families.

Participation is strong at each of the Neighborhood Centers, particularly in the East End. Sessions are filled quarter to quarter as parents register to continue with their same groups. Some Centers have established waiting lists because the demand for services currently exceeds the number of available sessions.

Family School. Patterned loosely after the Family Support Center in Philadelphia, this program is designed specifically for parents experiencing stress who are also having difficulty meeting their

children's (birth through five) needs. Examples of situations that participants in Family School are facing include: low income, single parenting, parenting at a very young age, chronic illness of the child or parent, depression and isolation of the parent, history of abuse or neglect in the parent's family, and recent loss due to divorce or death. Most families are referred by County Social Services or the Department of Health.

A social worker from the program first initiates three to six home visits to insure the program is appropriate for the family and to prepare them for the experience. Parents then participate with their children on Tuesday and Thursdays from 9:30 to 2:30 for 14 weeks at one site located in a former public school building. The program includes appropriate infant and preschooler play environments, community resources, speakers, parent discussion groups facilitated by a parent educator and a program social worker, parent-child activities, one-to-one contact with staff, and recreation and special celebrations. Transportation and lunch are also provided. A toy- and book-lending library is available. The program offers a weekly two-hour follow-up session to all families who complete the program. A parent-to-parent volunteer will meet weekly in a family's home for up to one year. There is no fee for participation.

Habitat is a program designed to reduce the risks associated with adolescent childbearing to both parents and their children through provision of health and educational services. Adolescent mothers receive 10 hours a week of child and family development education through ECFE as a regular class for credit. In addition, on-site child care is provided during the hours that mothers attend their neighborhood high schools. Transportation to the program is provided for both mother and baby. Home visits and a parent group are provided to any young mother who is no longer attending school. This group meets twice a week during the school year and combines a discussion group, an aerobics class, and early childhood education for children. A weekly discussion group is available for teen fathers that meets during the dinner hour and combines pizza, conversation, information, and support to young men who may or may not be actively involved with their infant. Teen fathers remain a very difficult group to recruit.

Parent/Infant Program. Marilyn Larson recalled, "I had done a tremendous amount of reading about service delivery models. One of the things I was noticing is there were a lot of different ways to offer parent education and support. I saw that every single one of the programs that served parents and their infants were connected to a medical model -- that must be the way to go. So right away we designed our whole parent-infant program with strong participation and cooperation with the medical community."

Focusing primarily on the first-time parent, this program offers single sessions and ongoing classes for families. A parent-infant educator visits prenatal classes at two local hospitals to talk about the transition to parenthood, and invites parents to participate in bi-weekly sessions held in the hospital setting for parents of infants from birth to nine months. A series of eight week classes is offered every quarter and scheduled during the day or evening hours. After nine months, parents from Duluth are encouraged to attend sessions at Neighborhood Centers. In all classes the infants remain with their parents during the activities.

Brenda Dettman, the parent-infant educator, offered her services free to the hospitals "as a trial thing." One hospital currently provides some financial support for her position. Both provide space and assistance in advertising. "Brenda's background as a medical social worker has proved invaluable in crossing the boundary between the educational and medical communities," said Marilyn Larson. Dettman also noted that "We are careful to say we're not there to be a therapist or to give medical advice. If parents raise particular questions, we'll encourage them to talk to their pediatrician or to seek professional assistance. I also feel very strongly about supporting the parent and realizing that everyone has a different philosophy of parenting. When I start a series of sessions, the first thing I say is that I'm going to share a lot of information about infants and I hope you will take the information and apply it where it is appropriate given your philosophy."

Special Programs. In addition to offering sessions for particular types of parents or children in neighborhood sites, a number of other services are offered to meet unique needs.

1. A parent educator now offers an on-site parenting group for men incarcerated at a minimum security center. According to Barbara Schwartz, "Most of the men are in their twenties and they're parents of young children. Most are incarcerated less than a year for non-violent crimes. The whole philosophy of the correction center is rehabilitation through education and work. All the men have jobs. They have the opportunity to earn a GED and receive counseling for chemical dependence or sex offenses. The center was excited to work with us.

"Children visit on the week-ends when a man's family comes. The adults struggle with trying to find time for kids and for one another. Their visiting site was inadequate. They took money out of their resident council fund and bought materials for a toy box and a better supply of toys and books for their children on the week-end.

"Our parenting sessions are offered on Monday mornings. Staffing on the week-end is an issue. Ideally it would be wonderful to have an early childhood teacher up there during visiting hours on a Saturday or Sunday to help develop the right play environment for the children and to help lead some parent-child activities -- and to give the parents some respite.

"The administration of the center is concerned about the transition back into the community. So often, the man's going home and the staff know that it's going to be difficult. It is easier if there are some community supports out there that can help. The other issue is how to help the family of the incarcerated. They have their own agenda and their own issues. If we had unlimited resources and staff, it would be wonderful to have a group for the women and children. I don't see that happening. What I see happening is that agencies might refer those families to ECFE and we will try to find programming within our present program."

2. Copeland Drop-In Center, in the Central Hillside area, is located within the Harbor View Community, where there are 200 low-income housing units. Single, female heads of household account for 75 percent of the families. Barbara Schwartz was responsible for developing the Center and remembers that "It really was a major job to get off the ground. Harbor View is located right in the center of town, but it is very physically isolated by the major roads that surround it. Many families have no transportation and rely heavily on buses or taxis to get around. We knew that we were not getting many participants from Harbor View, other than a couple of families going to Family School. We started initial talks with the Harbor View community day-care center regarding ECFE offering a parenting component. We had just had our initial talks when the day care center was closed by the county. Everyone was devastated. It was a real loss to this community.

"The space is owned by the Housing and Redevelopment Association. It is a place where families could naturally congregate, offering both indoor and outdoor play areas for all ages of children, and a space for children to do homework. We called them and they were very interested in leasing the space. It's $600 a month. We also had the opportunity to buy all the toys, equipment, and supplies that were there for a reasonable amount with some funds from an area foundation. ECFE has added a toy and book-lending library. This year, another area foundation provided funds for a nurse who is available to discuss health concerns with parents.

"There were a number of people -- social workers, HRA staff -- who said that we'd never be able to get a drop-in center going where young children must be accompanied by a parent. They said that parents up there were not used to that, they didn't value that, or that's not what is needed. We got it going over a year ago. At first we were open on a very limited basis with very limited staffing. Most of us just juggled our schedules to work there. Initially we dropped off a lot of flyers door-to-door. We tried to pick out who were the natural leaders within this community. Some of them have become our strongest advocates. We hear now from the participants that is really was the word-of-mouth that got

people to come -- the flyers were not as important as we thought. Start-up was slow, but we always had three, four, or five families drop by. Some days the count was as high as 20. We did have a summer program, but we changed the focus to a six-week session and which families pre-registered. Although the sessions were free to parents, registration was important because we needed an accurate count for bus transportation and lunches."

During 1987-88, the Copeland Drop-In Center continued to offer regular 1 1/2 hour periods, three mornings, one afternoon, and one evening per week. Staff make home visits to families needing additional support or encouragement. Gradually, the structure offered during a particular period is beginning to look more and more like that of a neighborhood site: 1) parents arrive with their young children; 2) some parents participate in play activities with their children while others leave them in supervised play areas and retreat to a parent lounge to smoke and chat; 3) parents voluntarily move to a separate room for group discussion with a parent educator -- not all choose to participate; and 4) parents rejoin their children.

Copeland Center retains its own distinctive tone, however. Women criticize the men in their lives and catch-up on who has moved in or out of Harbor View. One parent educator relates easily to these women because he has "a number of sisters and know[s] how to bad-mouth someone right back." He acknowledged that "It's taken a long time, but now almost everyone moves to the discussion room. But I don't press. We have some ground rules there -- no smoking or interrupting. I've been very careful to understand the subtle things that are going on here, like who uses which chair -- the big comfortable one; and who really is having a hard time and who is just bad-mouthing. We have a coffee pot and all chip in to buy pop. I leave some of the stuff to them. It gives them respect and ownership. It's very important to the group that I know they don't take without paying. Before, if these women saw each other on the street, they probably didn't speak. Now they all walk home together with their kids. They look out more for each other. Now that's something up here."

3. Other specialized services offered through ECFE include: outreach services at WIC nutrition clinics, pre-school screening, a newsletter, and crisis intervention and advocacy.

Population Served

During 1987-88, 929 parents and 893 young children participated in classes (defined as a series of two or more sessions on a specific topic). A total of 2,317 parents and 1,472 children participated in a class and/or special event. ECFE reached an estimated 27 percent of the eligible population in Duluth during the year.

Many different kinds of parents are participating in ECFE services. In a single day, parents in an East End neighborhood site may discuss traveling to Europe and when it is all right to say "No" to a child, while a teen parent talks to her peers at Habitat about being shut in her room by her husband for failing a biology test. A young mother who is pregnant and attending Family School taps a unlighted cigarette on the table and talks to an acquaintance about being drunk and getting in a fight over the past week-end. The group begins talking about discipline versus punishment. During an activity at the Copeland Drop-in Center, two plain-clothes police escort a man from an apartment to a car and an older woman asks what she should do with her granddaughter who is getting aggressive after supervised visits with her mother.

Curriculum

The parent education curriculum varies from program to program and site to site. Staff tap into the interests and concerns of parents and cover areas of child development, adult development, parent/child relations, family life, and the family as a unit in society. All classes stress discussion rather

than the presentation of factual information about child growth or development. The accompanying early childhood curriculum is designed to offer developmentally appropriate play activities and experiences in a setting that is safe and trusting.

Coordination with the Public Schools

ECFE staff coordinate activities with staff from other school departments to serve two types of parents: teens who have no more than one child and parents who have young children with developmental disabilities.

The Habitat program is an example of a joint venture almost by default. Habitat staff recalled that prior to being moved to ECFE, they were "living on soft money and being shuffled around the district." Currently, funding for the child-care component comes from a combination of district general funds and a child-care subsidy from the county. ECFE has stepped in and now pays for part of the salary of a parent educator; two staff, who work in the home-based component and the support group for teen fathers; transportation; equipment; and supplies. The other educational services are provided at the neighborhood high school of the young mother.

Marilyn Larson first initiated involvement with early childhood special education with a brief message to one of the special education supervisors saying it would be nice to get together to talk about cooperation between programs. Barbara Schwartz remembered that a copy of this memo was left in one of her files. "I took it from there. I talked to the early childhood handicapped supervisor and asked if we couldn't make a special presentation to her staff. We made a presentation regarding how parent information and support was a vital part of their program and they agreed. They also felt frustrated that they did not have the time or the resources to really follow through and support the parents and involve them like they felt they should. So we started to talk. There were a lot of issues to be worked out. We moved very cautiously and very slowly. Their social worker was very much involved and there was no release of family names to us. We gave outreach information to the staff and then it was dispersed to the families. Those families that were interested were pursued by the social worker and the parent educator from ECFE. We developed a group at one of the early childhood special education sites in the district. We met once a week for quite a few weeks and then we had to leave. That was due to their decision. They felt they were just too busy, too rushed to continue to have parents in the building. What happened is that the parents would come in for this parent group, but they also were involved in the classroom. Because of the transportation issue, they needed to come and go with their own children. The parent group never took the same amount of time as the children's special education. We moved to the local YWCA and offered the parents bus tokens. We were able to retain these parents and our program.

"Special Education has another elementary school site that they use for a preschool and we did the same thing at that site, but we stayed there. It was a positive relationship. We knew that we wanted to do more this year and they were sold on cooperating with us. We've expanded our efforts twofold, maybe even threefold. We started in two elementary sites. Their social worker is a co-facilitator with our parent educator. He shared the list of parents with the parent educator, and they both called all the parents. So you can see, the level of trust and cooperation has grown greatly. Special Education takes care of the transportation. They take care of the room. We take care of the assistant for sibling care. It's been a nice relationship." The supervisor, who was initially extremely cautious, confirmed that "I don't know how we ever got along without ECFE."

Barbara Schwartz has now joined the Interagency Early Intervention Committee. Next year, she will also be on the Interagency Review Team that actually reviews cases and makes placements. ECFE is working with staff from Special Education who have the responsibility for 0-5 year olds with special needs. But this time, the caution comes from ECFE, because resources are becoming tighter. "Marilyn has cautioned me regarding how much of our time and how much money we put into it," said Barbara Schwartz. "That's why I'm very interested in the idea of co-funding positions with them."

ECFE is also linked with K-12 by offering four sessions for parents of children entering kindergarten the following fall. The sessions include a bus ride, a classroom tour, and a talk with the principal.

Linkage to the Surrounding Community

The original report prepared by the Steering Committee in 1985 recommended that parents and children be viewed as the primary unit; surrounding this unit were agencies and services available to them, arranged like spokes on a wheel. The schools and ECFE were one of the spokes. By 1988, Marilyn Larson describes ECFE as an umbrella -- with other agencies and services still being the spokes. The availability of ECFE dollars and the diversity of the families residing in Duluth have led to the rapid growth of different types of services, which probably contributes to a sense that ECFE is the center of a network of services for families.

Initially, ECFE staff made contact with agencies to solicit referrals and establish a connection that might lead to services being developed for certain types of families who could not easily fit into a neighborhood site. Barbara Schwartz explained that "We never went in and said that we've got the program for you; this is what we want you to do. We always sit down with the staff and say, 'What are your needs, what would you like to see happening that's not happening? This is what we're all about. Do you see any way for us to work together?'" At the same time Schwartz makes it clear that "ECFE wanted to distance themselves from County Social Services because we feel that parents don't always have the best relationship with them. We didn't want to align ourselves too closely with them, yet we wanted to offer the support needed.

"We've been able to work with Public Health to offer activities at WIC sites -- it really works out beautifully as an outreach tool. At first, because the WIC site moved three times, they just didn't have time to work with us. But now we are involved again. I have introduced myself to the public health nurse at Harbor View and have offered to work with her, but I have not had much contact with her this year."

Other activities have included offering parent education and support activities on an itinerant basis to parents of young children with disabilities who attend a private medical rehabilitation program. According to Marilyn Larson, "We also share some in-kind things in terms of space or staff. For instance, the parent educator going out to the corrections center. We send our staff in to do the prenatal sessions at the hospital and then we get speakers back from them as part of our ongoing parent/infant group. St. Luke's hospital and the Housing Redevelopment Authority both charge us less rent than they could charge someone else."

Funding

The total ECFE budget was $797,000 in fiscal year 1987 and grew to $842,880 in fiscal year 1988. It is expected to remain at about the same level next year. Approximately 76 percent of the funds come from state aid; 19 percent is generated by the local levy. The remaining five percent is from fees, grants, and other sources. ECFE contributes approximately $53,000 to the district in indirect cost assessments, telephone services, and secretarial time.

During 1987-88, the proportionate allocation of funds among various program components was as follows:

	Allocation	Percent of Families Served (Projected)
Neighborhood Centers	40%	33%
Family School	14%	3%
Habitat	6%	3%
Special Programs	13%	21%
Infant Programs	5%	14%
Working Parents Center (now closed)	5%	27%
Administration	16%	--

Lessons From this Site

State Capacity for Expansion

In her role as consultant, Marilyn Larson remembers using a lot of information that was shared by the directors of the pilot projects. According to Larson, the basic model of services in the Neighborhood Centers evolved from the legislation. "I wasn't around for the first six pilot programs, so by the time I came in we were into the second round of six. The first six sites were starting their third year of operation. At this point, the legislation did somewhat spell out parent-child sessions, early childhood education, and parent-child activities. I don't know how those first six got started, but I do know the first thing we did was to go down and visit these sites. When the initiative consisted of 12 pilot sites and even up to 36, there was a lot of interaction among program directors. We would get together several times a year. We were involved in an extensive evaluation, and there was a great amount of sharing of the models among ourselves.

"When I learned what the Legislature was doing in 1984, I went straight to our vocational home economics person and said, 'Muriel, this is going to happen.' She had discretionary grant monies -- federal grant money that gets channeled though the state -- the Carl Perkins money. I encouraged her to use this grant money to hire a person full-time to provide technical assistance for program development. She said okay and wrote the grant, then hired me. I was actually hired full-time from September to March in 1984-85. The first thing I did was pick out our territory: from Grand Rapids east and from Pine City north. I wrote letters to all the School Boards telling them that I was available and what I could do. I hit most all of them sooner or later. Sometimes I went to a School Board meeting to give a presentation; sometimes to a group of interested parents who were trying to lobby. Sometimes the superintendent and the Community Education director had me in.

"What also made a difference is the guide for Early Childhood and Family Education Programs that was written and disseminated through the SDE. Directors took that guide and did it step by step by step. It needs to be revised because it was written based on the fact that funding was decreasing, not increasing, just prior to statewide legislation passing. It was how to do the pilot program on a shoestring; but I think without that book, a lot of people would have been in a lot more trouble. It might account for some of the similarities that you see around because that guide very clearly sets the tone, the philosophy, and the mission of ECFE.

"Districts starting programs now pick it up in the same way. We even still get calls each week from programs asking this question or that question. But if you compare Minnesota to any other state, we've probably had so much more going already. For instance, we have the Minnesota Early Learning Design here that is known all over the country. The state ECFE specialist utilized them to do some initial training. They did spots in some of the regional workshops. We had tons of good curricula from the vocational programs, so that stuff was all in place and ready to go. The fact that we even had those

staff from the vocational-technical schools around offering parent education gives us a history. When you think of another state, it may be far less fertile."

State Aid Enhances Local Involvement and District Support

Reflecting on her experience in Duluth, Marilyn Larson said that compared to 10 or 12 years ago, support in the public schools for ECFE has distinctly improved. "All the principals know about us. Those where we are in their schools are verbally supportive. The School Board has been very supportive verbally. We haven't gone and asked for anything and maybe that's why. If we ever want a piece of the general fund they will say no, but I don't think that indicates that they're not interested. I think they just clearly have priorities, and they do see K-12 as their top priority. If I had to prioritize in a school district, that's what I would say is the top priority too. I have been absolutely allowed, encouraged, to develop the program as I saw fit. Many times I've had to go up against school district regulations and I've had to say but we're different, we need this instead, and I've never been turned down. I see that as being very supportive.

"I can't say this for sure, but I think in districts here in Northern Minnesota, where the local levy is a smaller percentage than the state aid, there is no question about having a program. If you see free state money, I don't know that you stop and think about it if you are philosophically in tune with what it is for. I don't think a lot of districts did stop and debate. I think they saw it as something to go for.

"I think one thing that has hindered ECFE is there was not enough work done with superintendents, principals, and School Boards. Many times they have a program that they don't really understand. I think there are some real abuses out there of program funds. In retrospect, we should have held regional meetings for superintendents. We did invite Community Education directors and superintendents to the very first regional network meeting that was held, but we didn't do after them hard enough. I still think we should have bi-annual, maybe meetings every other year, where we invite not ECFE staff, but other school people."

Turf Issues

Any major turf issues were resolved through the pilot years in Duluth, when other organizational units shifted their resources to other service areas as ECFE came on the scene. In Duluth, both Community Education and the Technical Institute were doing parent-child classes when ECFE started. "They were replicating the Seton Hall model," recalled Larson. "When we got our first two pilot programs, they continued on with their programs for a while in other neighborhoods. Once the expansion came, they pretty much backed out. Any staff were reassigned to other activities. The Technical Institute had just been hiring staff on an hourly basis. I used to do some of it. The TI still does a single parents' group, but its probably a little bit more targeted toward people with school-age kids. They've gone into the school-age population a little heavier and they don't do very much at all for parents of pre-schoolers now."

The Steering Committee charged with planning the city-wide expansion of ECFE was organized into five sub-committees. One sub-committee, charged with looking at coordination of services, undertook the task of completing an up-to-date looseleaf notebook of available services in an effort to promote cooperation and coordination and alleviate duplication. It is interesting to note that, rather than mentioning the reduction of gaps in overall services to meet the needs of parents and children, this committee emphasized the development of appropriate programs and services based on the legislative guidelines for ECFE, with a caution not to duplicate services that might already exist in the community.

When queried about whether there were any duplication of services, Larson responded, "I think one of the reasons why we've been so successful in Duluth is because there is very little competition out

there with other agencies that provide services to families. We were able to come in and figure out what other people did, and arrange our services to supplement those things and not supplant them." Representatives from early childhood special education in the district and county agencies confirmed that they are currently satisfied with their involvement with ECFE. All consider it to be a resource for "their" types of families, offering services that would otherwise not be available.

Some overlap seems unavoidable. According to Larson, "Right now we have a child-care resource and referral service for working parents. The county very much feels that we shouldn't be doing that because they're doing it. The problem is, all they do is give parents a list of names, they don't have any criteria kinds of things. If a parent calls us, we ask if he or she prefers a smoking or non-smoking situation. We have a lot of different factors that we can sort out and they don't do that. But they have right from the start felt that we were duplicating services."

Facilities Must be Rented

In Duluth, as school enrollments have declined, schools have been closed, and sometimes sold. Both the superintendent and Marilyn Larson confirmed that space is very tight in the district. "We only have permanent neighborhood sites in three elementary schools," said Larson. "We use a closed elementary school that is very nice, so really four. But we spend an awful lot of our money on rent for other places. The problem is twofold. One, finding a place the fire marshal will approve, with old buildings in Duluth; and then two, paying for it. Space is a common problem that runs throughout not only our program, but every other program in the state."

Staffing Issues

Programs administered through the public schools do face some complex issues in scheduling and credentialing of staff, which may limit programming. Marilyn Larson related her experience in Duluth: "Before we ever started with this expansion, because we had those ECFE pilot programs, there was a rider within the teacher contract that said ECFE or early childhood teachers could be required to work evenings. So all along, people have seen us as part of the schools, but different. I haven't run up against much. The only thing that has occurred was when teachers were laid off in the district. We had some bumping going on. I know that it's difficult, but we have always required early childhood licenses for our teachers. No one with only a K-6 license has ever been able to bump in. They've had to have the early childhood license. They may have never taught in it, but at least they have the license. So that's made for some staff disruptions. Now, that hasn't happened in the last three years, but during the pilot years it made for some disruption."

As Larson thought about it, three additional issues came to mind, which may be specific to Duluth. "One, it states right in the teacher contract that I can only require teachers to work Monday through Friday. I think Saturday morning would prove to be a good programming time and I have chosen not to pursue that for now because I have enough to do. Another is in the structure. I can't possible run an $842,000 program alone. Yet I'm the only person who can evaluate staff. Now, I have seven specialists who work with me. They all work in quasi-administrative roles. They are hired as teachers and are called specialists, that's the district's constraint. But, they can't evaluate the staff with whom they work and they should be able to. Finally, the licensure issue. If we want to hire an Indian Education person to do parent education who doesn't have a license, we cannot offer benefits. We can hire him or her as a consultant; that would be the only way. But then you don't have that person as part of your staff; supervision may be difficult."

Larson went on to qualify her support for licensure of parent educators and early childhood teachers. "Our most successful parent educators, by and large, are those people whose degrees are in social work, psychology, sociology. As long as this field attracts the ex-social workers, the psychology

majors, who are willing to go get their certificates, fine -- but the 22-year-old college graduate who decides to get an early childhood family education license to cover all bases -- they're not even going to make with the groups in the neighborhood sites, much less in the real hard core group. No way.

"We have 10 to 12 people having to make that very rough decision about whether to go back and get licensed, but I am absolutely amazed at the kinds of people this field attracts. I don't know what it is -- but they're usually people who are highly skilled, extremely sensitive to cultural and other family issues, and right away decide for themselves how one has to operate in groups. I don't think you need to have had years of training about being low-income. I never did, and I went in and did groups like that. One has to be very accepting of different life styles and experiences, really be able to listen with open ears, and to really try and understand. So somehow, I don't worry about it because I just see the people who want the jobs by and large as being very good. Now, I don't know if this is true all over the state. We're a larger area with three colleges right here."

Barriers to Collaboration

Marilyn Larson outlined the issues and constraints she faces in setting up collaborative arrangements: "Jointly funded initiatives for multiple-stress families were not considered, partially because we needed to get things going quickly. If you're going to go from $90 to $565 thousand, you can't spend too much time setting up models. Second, I was real fearful of getting into collaborative ventures and I still am. I'm just at the point now where maybe we're ready; where I know what we're willing to give up and you always give up some program control. If you're going to have a therapist on staff, that's going to change the texture of what you offer. It's one thing that I have received a lot of criticism for -- that we did not develop those financial partnerships right from the start. I think it would have hung us up and taken a lot of time to work though. It would have not given us a chance to see what works when you're calling all the shots. One of my goals for next year is to seriously consider whether we could go back, say to St. Louis County social services, which is the main place I've received a lot of criticism for not charging them for families attending Family School." Barbara Schwartz added that "Family School is very important to Marilyn. She really wanted to do Family School, and I think she had a good idea in her head as to how she wanted it to unfold. She had the resources, and the staff, and the space to do it on her own."

Family School was started by Marilyn Larson with extensive input from public agencies in the community. For Larson, the issue has become one of figuring out "what we consider to be an appropriate role to ask the County to play without having them dictate who our families are, and how we need to serve them. I think many places have agreements, where they will do some reporting on the parents. I think the reason we've been so successful at not only getting, but serving, multiple-stress families is that we make it very clear to them there's no connection between us and the County. Also, I think parent education and support only works in certain circumstances. I think we're certainly not experts at it, but we're beginning to know better which families are appropriate and which aren't. If we start taking a lot of families who aren't appropriate because somebody says they need to come, I think it's going to water down our effectiveness with all families."

Community Change

Marilyn Larson talked about the fine line ECFE walks in the community. "Any time you get ECFE directors together we talk about our role in community change. Frankly, I think 90 percent of parent education is values clarification -- helping people to get straight about what they think and feel; what they want in relation to their parenting role. I think that one of the biggest outcomes of that is community change. But I think that because of our funding mandate, I feel somewhat constrained to go around saying that. You know our mandate is not pregnancy prevention, that's for sure. But yet, if one is talking primary prevention at this different level, not within the family, that's the realm we get into.

"I think community attitudes are changing. I'm not so sure we're as deliberate about it as we should be, but the fact that we have a place where we absolutely think you are wonderful because you are a parent, and that's the only criteria you have for being here, I think it's a very positive place for community attitudes to begin to change. Maybe what we can do is to support the dad who says, 'How come I can't get a child-rearing leave in my company? Why is it only for women?' We do support that, somewhat consciously and somewhat unconsciously. But, we have to be willing to speak out on certain issues. We do that some, but again, because it's not part of our mandate, we have to be careful how much of our resources we devote to it."

A Resource Center for Working Parents, set up as a place to drop in to chat and a setting for parenting sessions during the noon hour and after the work day, has since closed. Here parents, not their employers, had to give up the time necessary to participate. According to Larson, "That's exactly why we don't have the working parents' center any more and we don't do that. For one thing, our attendance was not good. Secondly, we felt like we were just adding to the stress. We're really thinking long and hard about TV programming to reach working parents. But, you know what we can do, we can act as a catalyst to get people together for a breakfast meeting -- the Chamber of Commerce, the business owners -- to start to talk about work and family issues. I see us doing more and more of that once we get this program development stuff under our belt."

The Boundaries of Preventative Programming

The ECFE program in Duluth is one of the few in the state to target services explicitly to multiply stressed families. The concept of a Family School does clearly extend the boundaries of what family education and support, alone, can be. "If the reason people have narrower boundaries is because they feel they have to **fix** things with families, and they know they can't, it isn't going to work," said Larson. "But if you keep in mind that you're an education and support program, and you depend on the client to decide what they need, then you don't have to worry about that quite so much. The Family School does employ a social worker, but does not offer clinical services or other basic education or vocational components. According to Barbara Schwartz, "We probably have some clients in Family School who are receiving services from the Human Development Center [psychiatric and counseling services], but we do not work together in planning programming. I think they have another job to do and their focus is different than ours."

"One of the things we've discovered," said Larson, "is that Family School is not for everyone. If there are alcohol and drug abuse issues that have not been addressed yet, we do not have the staff or the resources to deal with the chemical abuse. What we offer doesn't stick while that's an issue. So we're much more likely to choose a family where the person has just been through treatment, rather than one where chemical abuse is still an ongoing issue. We found very early on that mildly retarded parents don't work in Family School. It's kind of a chaotic atmosphere; you need some degree of verbal abilities, because the whole emphasis is on the support of the group. If you have too many deficits, so you have nothing to give to the group, it skews the balance way off. Right away we realized that retarded parents in that situation were lost and were draining the energy from the group, so we do something else for them. Finally, there has to be some small amount of motivation to want to participate. I'm not saying that people **want** to be there, but there's something in them that says, 'O.K., I'm going to go.' Even if it's a court order, maybe its because they want their kid back and this is what the judge says to do. But for somebody that says, 'I don't want to go, I don't see any reason for it,' and after we visit two or three times and they haven't changed, then we just don't see how anything we do is going to help. Now, that doesn't happen very often because usually after we visit someone in their home three or four times, we can hook into something. There's some reason they'd like to be there. I'm not saying we won't take the

hard cases, or the difficult ones, but I am saying there are just certain things that make the service delivery inappropriate."

The issues don't stop even after families become 'hooked' on Family School. ECFE staff who work at Family School all say there are graduates of the program who are not linking up with follow-up services or other, less intense ECFE services. "We've come to the conclusion," said Larson, "that there are several reasons: one, people are feeling really good when they leave Family School, and they quite often are getting into schooling or job things; it's kind of an impetus, so their lives become a little more complicated. Second, if you have a group made up of people who pretty much have deficit situations in terms of their contribution to the group, you can only hear those stories so many times before people begin to tire of it. Finally, I think parents are somewhat disappointed and almost angry with us at the end, because we've done this wonderful thing with them. They don't verbalize any anger, some of them do say, 'Yeah, now we can't come anymore.' But, it's like they can't recreate the experience, which is dependent upon a whole day and really they've had a whole day of respite from their kids. Now they find they must get themselves dressed and out in 40 below weather, but only for an hour and a half, it just doesn't feel the same. It doesn't have the same intensity to it and they just don't have the interest. Before, we would say to families in about the twelfth week of Family School, 'O.K., now Family School is ending, but you're going to have the opportunity to do follow-up and you have the opportunity to have a volunteer come to your home and visit you once a week.' Some of them would take it. The ones who take the volunteer are the ones who have continued on follow-up. What we've decided to do is initiate the volunteer process earlier and just say to families, 'Part of Family School is that you get someone to come and visit at your house once a week, a parent just like you.' Then we will have the volunteer help us funnel them into one of our other offerings. They may go into a single parent group. Many of them live up at Harbor View, so they could start attending the Copeland Drop-in Center. But we think that it sounds healthier to not have them be with the same staff and try to recreate an experience that isn't possible."

Bloomington and Richfield Public Schools

Community Education & Early Childhood Family Education: "In the Bloomington and Richfield school districts, the relationship is a good one. The Community Education directors from both districts are very supportive. I feel they have respect for the program and trust in my leadership. They give me input and encouragement. They hold us accountable, but give us professional independence. For the most part, we share the same goals and objectives for program participants and staff.

"I believe that being a part of the school system adds credibility to ECFE programs. We have a close relationship to the K-12 program which I see as being mutually beneficial. Parents have told me they like the idea of the program being part of the schools. I don't think they differentiate Community Education from the K-12 program. Many parents feel that if they get involved with ECFE when their children are young, it will contribute to their later success in school."

Carol Huttner, ECFE Coordinator

Setting

The ECFE program is a cooperative venture between two neighboring school districts: the Bloomington public schools and the Richfield public schools. Both communities are part of the first ring of suburbs around Minneapolis. Richfield, located immediately to the south of Minneapolis, is very small geographically (37 square miles) with a population of approximately 38,000. It is primarily a residential community, without much industry. Bruce Abrahamson, the director of Community Education, described Richfield as a "suburb with a home-town feel. People moved in here during the late 1940s and early 1950s when two developers essentially built a couple of major housing developments. Those who settled here have stayed, even though their children have now graduated from high school and left home. We have a large number of residents who are 70 plus in age and still living in their own homes."

Bloomington, with a population of 84,480 (1987 estimate), is now the third largest city in Minnesota. The size and total number of local employers (primarily in the hospitality industry, computer manufacturing, and telecommunications) distinguish it from a bedroom community. However, said Jim Stewart, the director of Community Education, "Bloomington has little identity as a major city in Minnesota; it lacks a center of town, a newspaper, or a radio station."

The city has an east end and a west end of town; some say that Orrin Thompson stratified the community during the 1950s and 1960s by developing and marketing "luxury living in beautiful, prestigious, West Bloomington."

Both districts have experienced rapid growth followed by substantial declines in their K-12 enrollment -- approximately a 31 percent decline between 1977 and 1987. Richfield's decline was earlier and sharper: school enrollments dropped by an estimated 63 percent between 1967 and 1987. Currently, less than 20 percent of the households in either community have school-age children. The K-12 enrollment in Bloomington was 12,194 in 1987-88; Richfield enrolled 4,416. Minority students make up 6.9 percent in Bloomington and 9.4 percent in Richfield, mirroring the racial composition of these communities as a whole.

Richfield and Bloomington are both solidly middle-class communities, with a few neighborhoods that might be considered upper-middle class. A small percentage of the population in either city could be classified as low-income, but according to Jim Stewart, the numbers are increasing "as we are seeing more

single parents due to divorce. We do have families with limited incomes clustered in apartment complexes and some Section Eight housing." Bruce Abrahamson added that "A program like ECFE is needed at least as much by middle-class families if stress on the family is measured in terms of divorce, drug use by youth and adults, dual working couples, the need for family support and education -- issues that cut across economic lines."

Community Education in Richfield and Bloomington

The Community Education directors in Richfield and Bloomington are both fairly new to their respective positions, but ended up in them under very different circumstances. Bruce Abrahamson had worked in the Richfield Public Schools for a number of years as a teacher and middle school administrator, prior to being placed on unrequested leave due to declining enrollments. Approximately three years ago, the Community Education director was retiring and the superintendent asked Abrahamson if he wanted to return and assume the position.

"I thought hard about it and decided to return to the district and education," said Abrahamson. "There are both good and bad things to my not having an extensive background in Community Education. One of the good things is that I looked at the state CE mission statement and thought, 'If we're supposed to be about taking a look at the resources and matching them to the needs of the community, then it's not really so important if I'm offering a course or someone else is offering it. My purpose is to see that the course takes place and people get funneled into it. The best way to do that is to be non-competitive. So we work very closely with our city. Also, it is just not realistic for a very small program to offer every service. So we have started working cooperatively with neighboring districts.

"When I started as the Community Education director, the program was not extensive. We were offering enrichment classes, the usual meat and potatoes of Community Education. But we, like others, are breaking out of that now. We are now involved in ECFE, adult basic education and the learning exchange for the handicapped." The budget for Community Education (including ECFE) was approximately $518,000 in 1987-88.

Jim Stewart, the director of Community Education in Bloomington, has been involved in CE for over 20 years. Prior to coming to Bloomington almost two years ago, he had initiated and served as the director of CE in two other school districts in Minnesota.

"I don't know if I have a separate philosophy of Community Education," said Jim Stewart. "I have a philosophy of education. I feel strongly about lifelong learning. I believe that we are all teachers and learners and that learning can happen anywhere, at any time. I really believe in grass-roots involvement, local ownership, and decentralized management. I favor partnerships. I may be kind of an oddball because I don't like to see programs put into little corners: K-12; 5-6; 9-12; we do this, CE does that. I don't see those boundaries or turf. But, more and more, I think society is moving in my direction. The learning issues of senior citizens are just as important as those of a four-year-old.

"When I came to Bloomington, the Community Education program was basically a facility-based, adult enrichment program. Almost all of the activities were run out of a former school building that had been converted into a Community Education Center. There were two outstanding programs, ECFE and adult basic education, that operated independently as departments within Community Education, almost like appendages. One of the reasons that I accepted the position as director here is that the current superintendent is committed to the life-long learning concept. So, we're gradually moving that way -- but also having to deal with resource constraints."

Currently, Community Education services in Bloomington are organized into the following major areas:

- adult enrichment;
- adult basic education;
- extended day for children;
- the learning exchange to meet the leisure and educational needs of the adult disabled; and
- ECFE.

A fitness center and an indoor community swimming pool also operate through Community Education. A new joint venture between the Bloomington School Board and the Bloomington City Council includes the opening of two Neighborhood Centers at elementary schools in Bloomington. These Centers will be guided by a citizen Advisory Council and a Neighborhood Center coordinator. These centers are intended to offer Community Education activities in convenient locations; and to initiate the Key Communicator/Crime Prevention program to make it easier for residents to work with the police, the schools, and each other to address neighborhood concerns and reduce crime. Jim Stewart expects that "if the Centers are successful, we will eventually fund eight on a cooperative basis with the city."

The total estimated budget for Community Education in Bloomington, including ECFE, was $1.9 million in 1987-88. As with Community Education generally, the program operates at no cost to the local school district. According to Jim Stewart, CE contributes resources to the public schools in the form of staff, funds for building utilities and maintenance, and use of equipment and supplies (newsletters).

The Community Education directors from four neighboring suburban districts (including Bloomington and Richfield) have voluntarily gotten together to collaborate and share the costs of several specialized programs: adult basic education (Southern Hennepin Adult Programs in Education, or SHAPE), services for adults who are disabled, and business education. When the statewide ECFE legislation passed in 1984, Richfield joined with Bloomington to expand ECFE services that Bloomington had developed during the pilot years. Currently, the Bloomington public schools acts as the fiscal agent for the program and bills the Richfield public schools for a portion of the total budget based on enrollment. Said Bruce Abrahamson, "The trust level between the directors of Community Education involved in this is very high. I believe that under this arrangement we can deliver the best program for the least amount of cost."

History

Bloomington was home to two of the original ECFE pilot sites funded through the Council on Quality Education. One program began in 1975-76; a second in 1977-78. Each site served a particular elementary attendance area in Bloomington and offered center-based child development activities, center-based parent and family education, a resource library of materials for parents and children, and pre-parenting education for adolescents. In addition, one site offered early health screening. Funding for each site was approximately $60,000 per year during the early pilot years.

In 1984-85 the two pilot sites finally merged to enhance cost-effectiveness of program operations as state legislation shifted responsibility for ECFE from CQE to Community and Adult Education. According to Jim Stewart, "ECFE was moved under the Community Education umbrella, but it continued to maintain a separateness. It came as a developed program with a levy mechanism that allowed us to fund it. More and more, it is becoming a community service under our concept of Community Education. However, the legislation specifically limits the use of ECFE funds to parents of preschool age children. I'd rather see it as family support and education for all children."

Carol Huttner remembered that she first became involved with ECFE in Bloomington during the pilot years. "It was approximately eight years ago. I was teaching elementary school, and feeling some frustration because I did not have any interaction with parents, other than conferences or when the students were having problems. So when I found out there was a program like ECFE, I applied to be a parent educator on a part-time basis. At that point in time, the program looked a lot like it does now, only very

scaled down. We only had four teachers. Basically, the goals and philosophy of the program were geared to the population of Bloomington -- middle- to upper-middle class families.

"It was almost three years ago that I became the ECFE coordinator. I had started to get more involved with administrative things as we were starting to grow. Then the former coordinator left to take the ECFE coordinator position in Minneapolis. When the district had gone through one round of applications and not found a person who was right for the job, I ended up applying for the position. The year that the levy funds came through was a difficult year, but it was a nice one because we had the resources to do the things we had always wanted to do. We went from serving 742 families in 1984-85 to serving 1,538 in 1985-86. In 1984-85 we had nine certified and nine non-certified staff. The number of staff increased to 12 certified and 15 non-certified in 1985-86. It was particularly difficult because we had a number of teachers who had worked in the program for many years who left to become ECFE coordinators in other programs."

Program Goals and Philosophy

The mission of the Bloomington/Richfield Family Center is to strengthen families through quality education and support in parenting and parent-child relationships. The importance of the family and the need to reinforce positive self-concepts of all family members is a major focus of the Center and its staff.

When asked how she would judge a program successful, Carol Huttner answered: "Beyond the formal and informal evaluations we do, I look closely at the increased number of families and the different types of families we serve. In reality, it gets down to judging the program at a gut level. When I walk into a class and there is a positive feeling among parents, children, and staff, that is success."

Program Characteristics

Services

Bruce Abrahamson stressed that "ECFE is offered as a single program in Bloomington and Richfield." Services are located primarily at two Community Centers, both former public school buildings. A limited number of classes meet at a church site and another former elementary school in Bloomington. Said Abrahamson, "Our Community Centers are almost adjacent. Bloomington's is less than three miles from here. So we primarily offer the environment for families with very young children here in Richfield. Courses for families with older children (age 2 to pre-K) are held at the Center in Bloomington. All the courses are listed in each of our Community Education catalogues and we have one registration process."

Classes meet on a weekly basis for two hours. The classes are scheduled as a series of eight-, four- or two-week sessions throughout the school year. A limited number of classes meet for six weeks during the summer months. Parents select classes based on the developmental age of the child with whom they will participate. Other classes are targeted to families with twins, single parents, fathers, or pregnant mothers who also have a pre-schooler. A limited number of classes with special topics or activities are offered including, kindergarten kick-off and family gym time. Child care is available during most sessions for pre-school siblings not enrolled in classes with their parents.

Classes tend to follow a similar format: 1) parents and children spend time together in child-centered activities; 2) parents withdraw gradually from the activities and meet separately in a lounge setting; 3) children remain under the supervision of early childhood staff; and 4) the early childhood teacher visits with parents near the end of their session to debrief the activities of the children.

Fees for classes are based on a family's yearly gross income and currently range from $6 to $39 for an eight-week series of classes. Fees are pro-rated for classes that meet less frequently. Childcare is $16 per child per eight-week series for families with an annual income over $24,000 and $13 per child if the annual family income is below $24,000.

ECFE staff also offer child development and parenting classes to teen mothers enrolled at Richfield high school. According to Carol Huttner, "The young women aren't necessarily Richfield residents; they are from the metro area. The one thing I like about the program for teen parents is that the young adults who enroll as pregnant teens also work in the day-care center and get some experience with young children. Also, the young children are well cared for while the moms are in school.

"The thing that is missing from the teen parent program is that there is very little available to them after they leave high school in parent support and education. Many don't feel comfortable in our current ECFE classes. We've had a few of them come to a Center, but it hasn't worked for them. It is an area we are continuing to work on."

ECFE offers a unique service in collaboration with SHAPE, the GED preparation classes offered through Community Education. "It's called SHAPE PLUS," said Carol Huttner. "I think it's the key to reaching the family that may be at risk. We've taken a service which is already available and where parents are already participating, and we've added ECFE to it." SHAPE PLUS is targeted to the low-income parent who is probably a single parent. "Basically, we extend the sibling care service to mothers during the periods they participate in the GED preparation class three afternoons a week. In order to receive this child care service, they must participate in an ECFE parent-child class. They have the choice of enrolling in any class, or participating in one geared to single parents. Most prefer the specialized group. Since we started it last year, it's been incredible. The moms traded off babysitting so they could study for their final exams. Some of them, five out of 15, continued in ECFE during the summer session and now participate regularly . I honestly don't think any of them would have chosen to take a parenting class on their own. We'd like to build on this and get more involved with other community agencies. Public Health will be doing some assessments so that we really start to work on the developmental needs of the children."

ECFE also offers a number of other specialized services including a lending library, a newsletter, limited health screening, and outreach services at the WIC nutrition program.

Participants

During 1987-88, ECFE served 943 different parents and 1,178 children in classes. A total of 1,189 parents and 1,507 children were served in a class or special event. Approximately 26 percent of the eligible population in Bloomington and Richfield were involved with an ECFE class or special event, down from an estimated 38.7 percent in 1986-87. The drop in the percentage of total population served is due to changes in data collection procedures. The actual numbers of participants have been increasing.

Curriculum

"I can remember when I first started in ECFE during the pilot years," said Carol Huttner, "we did a lot of talking about curriculum -- what we did, what worked, what didn't work. Our curriculum has developed over the years into a wide variety of written materials. We have a filing system based on topic areas. An example would be our folder for ice-breakers, different ways to start groups. We have shied away from using one canned curriculum and are constantly drawing materials from many sources.

"The curriculum we use with children is based on the developmentally appropriate practices of the National Association for Education of Young Children and the High/Scope materials by David Weikart. Our staff have goals and objectives for each age group. We feel it is important to be able to tell parents why we are doing certain things with each group and we want to be sensitive to the individual approaches of the teachers. Overall, I would say that our curriculum has evolved based on what has worked and what hasn't, particularly in Bloomington/Richfield."

Coordination With the Public Schools

ECFE has been involved with the public schools in three ways: 1) providing parenting classes to teen parents on an itinerant basis; 2) offering targeted classes for parents of children with disabilities; and 3) offering classes for children and parents that cover kindergarten readiness and school communication. Carol Huttner has also been involved with a kindergarten task force that she described as a "good learning experience. I think the K-12 mindset is beginning to be more family-oriented. I think they value what we do and I feel listened to when I go to these meetings. We are also included in a variety of committees: the at-risk task force, youth development, and the early childhood screening done through the districts."

The ECFE coordinator has also been actively involved with the group planning services for children aged 0-2 who are developmentally delayed. "I feel very good about the system we're setting up," said Carol Huttner. "Staff from four of the districts in the area took it upon themselves to start planning how we would serve this age group before the special education law changed. We've been working on it for two years. We've decided on a central person hired cooperatively by the four districts to handle referrals. A referral goes to her, then a Public Health nurse goes into the home and conducts an initial screening to determine if further assessment is needed. After all the necessary assessments are completed and pulled together, there is a meeting to decide what services are appropriate. It may involve us, special education, County Social Services and Public Health. Throughout this process, the family is very involved. Depending on the needs of the family, they might participate in classes at the Family Center or home visits might be initiated by Public Health and ECFE."

Linkage to the Surrounding Community

"The area is rich in resources for families," said Carol Huttner. "In the past, I'd say there has been a turf issue between us and Public Health. In the past they have provided support to individual parents, but that can build up a dependency. They certainly can play a transition role if we can come up with more specialized services for these families -- even drop-in playtime.

"We now have a very strong working relationship with Public Health. If they feel there is a parent getting ready for that next step they will call Sherry Goblish, our staff person who has been working in the outreach area. Also, Sherry is doing some of the home visits with Public Health clients.

"Formerly, I was trying to do a lot of the outreach myself to many of the different community organizations. But really it's impossible for me to do it all. We're becoming almost two programs. The center-based parent-child classes, the library, and special events are one. Then there's the outreach network and services to meet the needs of teen parents, and families involved with WIC."

Funding

Total funding for ECFE has grown from $455,300 in 1986-87 to $505,300 in 1987-88 and is considered very stable. A large proportion (85 percent) of the revenue comes from the local levy; approximately five percent is vocational aid. Fees represent the remaining eight to ten percent. Both Bloomington and Richfield are levying to the maximum currently allowable under the legislation. Future growth in the program will be tied to changes in the funding formula. Carol Huttner has considered cutting staff hours to save money. "Certified teachers are currently paid for the time spent vacuuming and cleaning up after classes. We could probably find a less expensive way to get this done. No matter how we look at it, you're taking away from what staff have right now."

The funding situation is exacerbated by a number of fixed costs, some unanticipated. The ECFE program is charged for the dedicated space they use in the Bloomington Community Center (approximately

$20,000) and the program must absorb any salary increases for ECFE staff. Until this year, the program had been reimbursed directly for expenses such as FICA and for teacher retirement.

Lessons from this Site

A Need for Specialized Services

Carol Huttner has become convinced that when ECFE tried to "mainstream" the more at-risk parents into their ongoing groups, "They didn't fit. I don't know what else to say. We just thought, 'We're for everybody, what difference does someone's background make?' Well, you can say that until you are blue in the face. It does make a difference; a huge difference. I can remember when I was doing a parent group and we were talking about time for oneself. I was thinking that for me it's a hot bubble bath at night. Other moms started talking and saying that every six months they take a trip without the children, or they go to the club, or they go shopping for themselves. I became very aware that some of the other people in the group were lower-income families and I began to wonder what we were doing to their self esteem. So we've got to find other options to serve families. One is working with Public Health; another is getting involved in the program for teen parents. What really excites me is that we're headed in that direction. We're learning that we have to do more than just more outreach for recruitment. When we recruit them, we have to offer a variety of services that meet their needs."

Barriers to Innovation

The Bloomington/Richfield ECFE program faces a number of potential barriers as staff try to develop programming to reach the families who are not drawn to participate in the more traditional, center-based classes.

1. Many of the staff hired to work in ECFE started in the program when it was center-based and geared to the parent who is a high school or college graduate and very verbal in a group situation. Not all staff feel comfortable working with non-traditional ECFE participants or packing up materials and driving over to the Public Health offices or an apartment complex to offer parent-child activities. "For some staff it works, and it's great," according to Huttner. "They are very involved in serving parents who are more at-risk and they do an excellent job. Other staff prefer the security of having the water table or orange paint Halloween week. It's a difference in personality and style. We've created an outreach task force now. One of the things that is just crucial for us to do is to keep the staff abreast of what we plan to do. Also, I'm no longer thinking that everybody should be everything. What we're going to do next year is form an outreach team."

2. Lack of uncommitted funds is a potential barrier to developing targeted services. Carol Huttner acknowledged that developing targeted services is "going to be difficult because of our budget situation." It's not that the Bloomington/Richfield program doesn't attract a large number of parents but, as Bruce Abrahamson explained, "If we want to attract the difficult-to-serve family it takes extra time and resources. We know in our adult basic education program that the availability of child care and transportation makes a difference and these things are expensive. I believe that all parents benefit from family support and education. I don't want to pull resources from services that attract the middle-, or even upper-middle-income families to emphasize services for the lower-income families."

3. The ECFE legislation clearly specifies that funds are to be used in family support and education services where there is substantial parent involvement. Traditionally, the SDE has not tolerated the use of funds for more traditional child care or early education activities that did not have strong parental involvement or for activities involving parents of school-age children. As Carol Huttner explained, "In a way, I like having those constraints because district personnel, community agencies, staff and parents could pull us in all different directions. This way, I'm able to say, 'This is what the money can be used for, nothing else.' It also can narrow our vision, in that you can't do anything else with the money. I've come to believe

we should do parenting with families with school-age children, we've got to do it with other money or be very creative about it and still stay within the guidelines.

"We had to be very careful in developing SHAPE PLUS in order to stay within ECFE guidelines regarding the use of funds. I feel fine about it because we already have the child care specialist, the equipment, and the room there as part of our afternoon sibling care. Whether there are two, three, or 15 kids there, I still have to pay for the staff. Since SHAPE pays for the extra adult, I think it's O.K. It's a small amount of money to SHAPE, and they have the funds because of a grant. We do hire the person, and then they reimburse us for it. The SHAPE staff tell us that the moms couldn't come without it, because child care is so difficult to get. The clincher, and this is why I feel justified in doing it, is that those moms using the child care are required to take a parenting class through ECFE, and they can use it as one of their electives."

4. Bureaucratic barriers exist that must be overcome. According to Carol Huttner, ECFE does not have to deal with a lot of the things that Special Education must consider in any joint venture. "We wanted to cover part of Sherry Goblish's salary with special education funds since she would be serving some parents who have children aged 0-2 who are disabled. In order for the Director of Special Education to claim her on the special education report, she needs to be a special education employee on his payroll rather than ours. If we did that, she would have to be one of their union teachers. Then she could get bumped, because special education does not require teachers to have a parent education license to do what Sherry's doing. Therefore, it makes a lot of sense for a social worker to be doing the work with these families. It would have been great if 70 percent of Sherry's salary could have been reimbursed by the state under special education. It would have been no cost to our special education department whatsoever because we pick up the other 30 percent. But what we are going to have to do is bill Bloomington for the contact hours. We'll have to keep track of the families and the number of hours and all of that bookkeeping stuff. I'll be able to bill them for $8,000 or something. They will only be able to get 50 percent of that reimbursed through the state. It's a structural barrier at the local level because of different state guidelines. It's unfortunate because a lot of the reason for us getting involved is we don't have to worry about those numbers. I don't care how many standard deviations below the norm those kids are, or their families are, or anything else. We can cross their barriers, and get into the families that need us, whether they're two points below or whatever. Public Health can do that same kind of thing, but now when we have to talk about documenting that, it just gets to be a real mess. Some of the time that is spent is on the phone, getting this person hooked up with that person, and even our family events, those kids are already being counted by special education and special education can't count the mom and dad, it's only a child count."

Turf Issues

"At this point," said Carol Huttner, "I don't think the Technical Institutes are threatened by Parent Support and Education. Right now, I know they are shifting more into doing parent education for parents of school-age children. I think they have been wonderful to set up inservice and in their development of curriculum. Everything I've seen that comes out of vocational education is very structured. I don't think they offer the flexibility in their curriculum that would work with the parents we're trying to reach. We haven't utilized them as we could because there are other things that apply more towards the early childhood part of it."

Rapid Growth with Little Time to Plan

When ECFE went statewide in 1984-85, the Bloomington program experienced a huge turnover of staff. "In fact," remembered Carol Huttner, "many of our key people took leadership positions in other districts. Fortunately, we had some part-time people who could add hours, but it was difficult because we had several new teachers offering classes. Two of them were parents who had their licensure and who

had participated in the program. We've always had ample preparation and meeting time so that really helped. But when we got to over 40 staff members, it just became too expensive for me to run a three-hour staff meeting every week. As we expanded, there was much more of a need to establish written policies and job descriptions. This year we've finally reorganized so there are two lead teachers. We've become more accountability-oriented. Now staff turn in lesson plans; observation and staff evaluations are more ongoing. In the past, there wasn't a lot of that. It's just now that we are developing the outreach staff role."

Facilities

"We pay dearly for space in Bloomington," said Carol Huttner. Both districts have closed and sold or torn down school buildings as cost-saving measures. Since Community Education receives no in-kind resources from the general fund in Bloomington, expenses related to the operation of the Community Center must be charged to the various programs that use the building. ECFE could not operate at the scale it does solely based on fees. Some additional revenue is needed from year to year to cover operating expenses.

Support for Staff Working With Families

"I think one strength of our program is the support that staff have for one another," said Carol Huttner. "In that respect it's a benefit to having centralized versus decentralized services. There needs to be a strong support base when you are dealing with families. Whatever budget cuts we have to make, I don't want that to change. It's more than a class. It's more than just a session. There's so much more to it. It's probably only something that can be felt. If someone is setting up a program, having a strong base of support for staff is a key. Otherwise what can end up happening is staff don't feel a part of the team. I've felt it happen on occasion with staff members who might be working many hours or are working in two programs. There are times when the families you get are very hard to work with, and you need to be able to talk to someone about it. When you have a class of fifteen and only four show up, you need to have someone say, 'But look at those four!'"

Salary Structure for Staff

"The hourly rate of pay is not an issue with the staff, generally speaking," said Carol Huttner. "I think they feel their hourly rate of pay is acceptable. The fact that they don't have any kind of benefits is what's bothersome. It makes staff feel like they're not being treated as professionals. This year is the first time that our 30-hour people have had sick time or vacation pay. This is the first year that *I* have not been on an hourly rate of pay.

"Our staff are paid under the category of home-bound teachers. I'm not sure why. But that's another unfairness that just changed this year. Up until last July everyone got the same rate of pay. That is still somewhat true. Next year, everyone who started prior to July 1st will be making $14.75 an hour, whether it's someone like Sherry who is full-time and also has her masters' degree in Early Childhood Special Education, or someone who comes in and teaches 13 hours a week fresh out of college. It's a flat rate. So we're trying to professionalize the field and pay catch-up with the salaries at the same time we've grown to capacity in terms of what we can levy for budgetwise."

Keeping the Advisory Group Active

"The ECFE advisory group meets every two months in the evenings," said Carol Huttner. "We provide child care for them when they come. Basically, they do some of our special events; they informally

will bring up concerns that they might have. One concern that was brought up a year ago was that when they come to register for classes often the classes are already full, and it's because out-of-district people are registering for our classes. A new policy was developed that priority registration will be given to Bloomington and Richfield residents. They felt strongly that they did not want to charge other people any differently than they charge district people to come into our programs, but that it wasn't fair if people in the district were getting turned away because these people were filling the classes.

"The council is pleased we are doing more outreach and work with special populations. They would like to become more involved in this process. They have funded a video library for the program. A staff person worked with them to put it together. They would like to do more projects like that and would like to get more involved in the community. I think that's excellent. They're very active. I'd like to see them be less of a rubber stamp in input. One of their projects is they do an inventory for us at the end of the year on different classes they'd like to see offered. We use that as a springboard for planning." On the other hand, Jim Stewart said he "would like to see the group become more advisory and to develop policy recommendations rather than focusing on fundraising and service."

District 196: Rosemount - Apple Valley - Eagan

Community Education & Early Childhood Family Education: "I've now worked in ECFE programs under K-12 and Community Education. Under K-12, the administration left us alone and let us program -- let us do what we needed to do. We were able to offer services outside the schools. The key is the relationship -- more than the label of the administrative body over you. The one thing with Community Education, though, is they are used to the extended hours; they are used to the variety of services; they are used to the marketing. So, in those ways, ECFE fits more under Community Education."

Mary Sheedy Kurcinka, ECFE Coordinator

Setting

In Minnesota, the unit of division for a rural or Common School district was the neighborhood rather than the township. In order to form a school, a group of citizens could petition the county commissioners to form a district. The Plot Book of Dakota County, dated 1894, shows 18 rural school buildings [located in 16 rural districts and parts of four others], that would later consolidate into Rosemount and become District 5 in 1950. The new district covered over 100 square miles. In 1957, the district was re-designated Independent School District 196 with boundaries that now include part or all of nine municipalities and two townships.

Large-scale residential development began in 1959 and quickly changed the status of the area from rural to suburban, and finally to metropolitan. In 1960, District 196 had 1,072 students; by 1987 the number had increased to 15,915. Projections indicate continued growth to 29,000 students by 2000. Currently, there are more than 8,000 pre-school children in the district.

Located approximately 15 miles south of Minneapolis/St. Paul, with slightly less than 5,000 acres of undeveloped residential land, Rosemount/Apple Valley remains one of the fastest growing residential areas in the state. The area serves largely as a bedroom community for the Twin Cities, with District 196 and a Technical Institute being by far the largest employers in Rosemount or Apple Valley. According to JoAnne Ellison, the director of Community Education, "Farming is still active in the area. We struggle being in an area that has experienced a population explosion while many of our town fathers have strong ties to the old farms that were here for generations."

Overall, the population is racially homogenous: 96 percent are white, 2.5 percent Asian, with the remaining 1.5 percent being evenly split among blacks, Hispanics or Native American Indians. According to Mary Kurcinka, "Our average income is $35,000, so obviously we're an affluent community. However, we have pockets of every type of family, but they're in much smaller numbers, so they don't have the impact. Before we started the program for teen parents, there was nothing out here. If you were pregnant, you were put on home tutoring and remained isolated. If you don't have a car out here you are very isolated. If you have one car and dad takes it for work, mom's home all day alone with the kids."

JoAnne Ellison added that "many of the new homes here are huge with two and three fireplaces. You go inside the house and there is no living room furniture because the couple is putting all their income into the mortgage. I guess it's symbolic of these young families wanting very much to be upwardly mobile."

Community Education in District 196

Community Education started in District 196 in 1972, when the state first provided funding for directors of Community Education. "I started in the job six years ago," said JoAnne Ellison. "Prior to then, I was the district demographer. I'd say my view of Community Education comes from my heart. I have

always believed in the community. I was brought up in a small town and grew up believing you cared about your neighbors. So this has been an easy role for me to assume.

"Both the community and Community Education have changed a lot since 1972. I was a member of the first CE advisory council, so I remember it when it was a few athletic programs. At that time, the community really needed a place to just be -- everyone was moving in from other places and they did not have any extended family here. People needed people and the only place to get together was the schools. Churches hadn't been built yet. Apple Valley is just now completing its public recreation facilities."

The current mission statement for Community Education in District 196 reads:

> As an integral component of Independent District 196, Community Education strives to improve the quality of community life by encouraging citizen involvement, identifying community needs and resources, and providing lifelong learning opportunities to meet each individual's unique needs.

Mary Kurcinka said that she feels that the working philosophy in District 196 and Community Education is: "You will be the best. You will do quality work and you will respond to the needs of the community. We are expected to listen and tailor our programming to what we hear the community wanting."

During 1987-88, total Community Education revenues were projected at $1.9 million with approximately $636,000 generated through ECFE. Key CE programming areas include:

* adult and youth enrichment classes;
* an after-school youth program;
* a comprehensive swimming program;
* higher education classes in cooperation with area colleges and universities;
* adult basic education classes, GED preparation, and ESL classes;
* a center for senior citizens offered as a joint venture with the city of Rosemount; and
* ECFE.

Activity summaries for Community Education stress that district facilities are in use by students and community members at least 18 hours a day, six days a week.

History

"When I came here," said Mary Kurcinka, "the Technical Institute and Community Education had been offering about six classes of early childhood family education a quarter for many years. A base of good feelings about family support was already here in the community. Also, there was some knowledge of early childhood family education as a result. Since ECFE started, they have stopped doing these classes. We still have a monetary connection because the TI does give use some vocational reimbursement for the parent education classes offered under ECFE.

"I started as the ECFE coordinator in June of 1986. We had to open in September. When I started, I had a borrowed desk and a budget -- that was it -- nothing else. JoAnne Ellison had already advertised for people to be on an advisory council and she gave me the names. So I met with them, and I said, 'what do you see as the needs, what kinds of services should be here, how much should they cost, where should they be held, who should we be working with, how should we let people know we're here?' I also did that with the school principals; then we had a meeting where we invited 200 agency representatives -- day care, public health, social services -- and we asked the same questions. We told the day cares that 'we are not day care; we are not in competition with you. In fact, if you have a child who's having difficulties, please refer the parents to us.' I met with a group of area ministers and asked them the

same things. We've had very open communication from the beginning. We have not had to compete for resources. We just haven't had time to pick and fight because we've been so busy because of the rapid growth of the program. We designed the initial program using all the information we'd gathered. I also drew from my experience in an ECFE pilot site located in Minneapolis. We rented space in a commercial shopping center and worked with an architect to redesign it. I hired staff and we ordered everything.

"The advisory council has been very active since the beginning. We ask for parent feedback every quarter. We also have weekly staff meetings. In the beginning, there were only 12 of us at the one center; so everybody met including the teacher assistants and the secretaries. We would ask each other, how is this going, is it working, what needs to be changed. We ended up changing the parent-child interaction, some of our scheduling, and some of the classes that we offered. We've just been constantly evaluating, adjusting, monitoring and growing over the past two years."

JoAnne Ellison said that she has always felt it was important that ECFE staff be professional. "With that comes the education and licensure. If you are asking people to be qualified you cannot ask them to work for less than what I call a normal wage. I believe we get what we're willing to pay for, so we have paid our ECFE staff as professionals, under the master teacher contract, from the beginning.

"The School Board had some initial difficulty understanding why we needed to hire licensed staff to 'baby-sit.' Someone said, 'you can't tell me shaking a rattle is education.' I wish that I would have had Mary Kurcinka around to answer that; I had to explain it as a parent, myself. So, we first had to educate the Board to the fact that learning how to cope with a child can be taught. People are not born parents -- we all have to learn how to parent. We worked with them to understand there are parents who need to learn parenting and there now *are* people trained to offer this training. I'd say the Board has done a complete turn-around. They adore the program and they don't know how they got along without it. It brings parents to them all the time saying 'thank-you!'"

Program Goals and Philosophy

"ECFE is for all families, with a strong emphasis on the word family," said Mary Kurcinka. "It invites parents with all their children, birth to kindergarten, to learn new information, develop skills and have fun *together*. It is based on the belief that parents are a child's first and most influential teacher. Strong families nurture healthy, productive children."

All staff members were involved in an overall program assessment in the spring of 1987, after their first few months of operation. "We analyze everything. We are just a very analytic group," said Mary Kurcinka. Role expectations for all staff members were specified based on a working rationale for ECFE in the district. Overall program goals were developed and specific objectives were set for 1987-88. Since then, additional objectives have been developed as specific program components (e.g., teen/young parent program) have been added.

When asked to summarize the purpose of ECFE, Mary Kurcinka commented, "Well, I don't want to speak in jargon. Let me read something that I received the other day from a woman who has been coming to ECFE for three years. Before starting, she had three kids under three. She writes:

> I was very negative with Tony, spanking, yelling, expecting too much of him. I felt like I had failed, that he wouldn't do what I wanted him to do. He was so defiant, his behavior was so unpredictable. We had no control over him. We were nervous to take him anywhere. He had trouble getting along with kids. He would hit. His self esteem was low; mine was low. Because of this, Paul and I were arguing. One day, Tony came and said, "I hate myself." I knew that we had to get help. All of that changed after going to Family Place. I learned positive parenting techniques, especially in the spirited child class. It helped me focus on Tony. I set limits for him, I was consistent with my discipline. With all our children, I learned to discipline and not to punish them for things they did wrong.

I've learned to relax and have more control over them. I now communicate effectively with them. I remember my middle son, Mark, was much less active and a lot easier to parent than Tony. But with all the knowledge I've gained at Family Place, it makes it a much easier job to parent all of them. Now, Tony is doing very well in kindergarten. He's at the top of his class. He loves school and has many friends. All our relatives and friends now comment on how well Tony handles himself. We still have power struggles occasionally, but we work them out in a positive way. I want my children to become happy, healthy and confident adults, and to be able to succeed in school and to succeed in life. By being a part of their education now, I can make life's challenges a lot easier for them. Our family really feels a part of our community by being involved in the program. We plan to continue to go to classes until they are all in grade school.

"You ask, what's our purpose; that's it right there. Nancy works at Rainbow Grocery store. She has a high school education. That understanding of her kids, that reduction in stress, learning about positive discipline, all of it has strengthened her marriage and has improved her relationship with family and friends. To me, that's why we're here."

Program Characteristics

Services

ECFE classes usually meet weekly for eight weeks. Ten to 15 families are permitted to register for a particular class, depending on the number of children in the children's room. Due to the rapid expansion of the program, the demand for classes currently exceeds the number available. Therefore, parents are limited to one class per family, per quarter. Fees are $24-30 per quarter, depending on the class and are easily waived for those who cannot afford them.

Classes are primarily offered at two centers, both located in commercial space. The Family Place opened in 1986 and is located in a retail space at a small mall. A second center, The Family Corner, opened in 1987 and is located on the first floor of a small office building. Classes are offered on an itinerant basis once a week in the common area of an apartment complex in order to reach families with limited transportation and financial resources. Classes also meet at two area churches one to two times per week.

Classes held at the centers and community sites are advertised by age group of the children (parents of infants, toddlers, and pre-schoolers); by topic (self-esteem, discipline, parent growth); and by affinity group (single parents, adoptive parents, new neighbors). Scheduling is almost constant: mornings, afternoons, four late afternoons, four evenings, and some Saturday mornings. More specialized classes for teen parents are held at one of the centers (one class per quarter) and at the alternative high school (one class per quarter). ECFE also co-sponsors a weekly class with the Burnsville Community Action Council at a women's shelter. In the past, ECFE has offered a parenting class to Southeast Asian refugee parents in cooperation with District 191 as part of an ESL program. These classes and the class targeted to single parents are offered at no cost.

A number of special activities are offered through the year. These include:

1. Workshops. Single 1 1/2 hour sessions for parents and children. Topics have included developing creativity for the parents while children meet with a storyteller.
2. Music N' Movement. An opportunity for parents and children (walkers to kindergarten) to engage in large-muscle activities. Activities are held at two elementary school gyms, and are available two evenings per week.
3. Buck N' a Big Wheel. Once a month children bring their parents and a big wheel riding toy to an indoor riding course at a community site.
4. Field Trips. These activities are open to the entire family (older siblings may come).

5. Speaker Nights. An adult-focused speaker is arranged once a month. Child-care is available on a limited basis for children 16 months or older.

Other activities include a fall open house for families to come and play together; a Spring Fling (over 1,600 parents and children attended in 1987); and a monthly newsletter published during the school year.

Participants

During 1987-88, the ECFE program served an estimated 35.9 percent of the eligible population in a class or special activity. Of those served, 1.5 percent were minorities, 4.6 percent had family incomes below $20,000; 6 percent were single parents; and 3 percent were teen parents.

Program participation has increased dramatically over the past two years. "We tried a mail-in registration first," said Mary Kurcinka, "but it took us three weeks to process it, which was awful. That was with only one center. So we have a blitz, where parents come and stand in line. If you want to be first in line you have to come early. Once we open the door, we can process 300 registrations in 20 minutes. Even for the blitz, we have kids' toys all the way up and down the line, because we know that people will be bringing kids. We set up registration for families, not just for adults. Usually there are 300 people in line with all these kids, and nobody's crying.

"Parents can call to register for workshops and they can do that just a few weeks ahead of the scheduled date. For Music N' Movement parents can just say, 'today's been a good day, I feel like going tonight.' They just call ahead for that night. So there's a variety of ways to register and also lengths of commitment once you do. You can come that night, you can come in two weeks, and you can plan ahead for two months down the road. We try to have something available when parents call because families are constantly moving in here. So, if someone calls and we have just filled up our classes for the quarter, instead of saying, 'well, you have to wait two months,' we can offer workshops that are only advertised a month at a time or Music N' Movement that is happening that week. That's our role, to try and get parents into something immediately if they call or stop by. There is so much transience in this community, and we need to be very cognizant of it.

"We have parents who come in because they're having real problems with their kids, usually discipline problems. As a result of the discipline problems, they may be having marital problems because they're fighting over the kids' behavior, so there is a real need for sound information about discipline and development. Many people don't know what's normal; what to normally expect of kids. I see that across the board. Most families out here have only one or two children and are probably pretty isolated. They may not have a lot of friends with kids, and so they just see this two-year-old without any other two-year-olds around. They don't have a picture of what's normal, what's average, for a two-year-old. I see families dealing with stress, dealing with jobs and careers, with traveling, dual employment, financial worries, day care, all of the issues that come with having kids; then, the behaviors that come out in the kids because of the family stress. There are also parents that participate for enrichment. They come to spend some time with their children, slow down and have fun with their kids, and learn something while they're doing it.

"We also have the extremes. We have the teen parents who just have no idea how to hold their baby, how to recognize that they might be sick, how to find resources for themselves and for their baby. They have just minimal skills. We also work with the refugee parents who have moved out here for the farming and are involved in the English as a Second Language classes; their needs are very basic. We do a lot of things involving language -- family words, American games so that their kids have that experience and exposure. There's an incredible amount of cultural awareness that we give children in pre-school years, and if you're from another culture, you don't get it.

"So I'd say we have the whole spectrum. The more we work with it, the more we see that classes and activities have to be different to address this range. Also, sometimes a family will get involved for one thing and end up working on another."

Curriculum

"To this point, our curriculum's been loose, to be honest," said Mary Kurcinka. "We trained the staff using Caring for Children with Understanding. I was involved in writing it with Beth Cutting and Ann Lovrien. There is a conceptual framework at the beginning that lays out the rest. We've carefully planned how we open the parent-children interaction, and for the individual learner. We use a variety of techniques, how to question, how to present content along with application, and our closure with parents and children. We have not formalized it, however. We use both published and teacher-prepared materials. We use things about balancing work and family, building strong families, anger, and caring for children with understanding. The Spirited Child is mine and it's going in my book. We use the books Without Spanking or Spoiling and How to Talk. The rest of it is teacher-developed.

"Last summer we worked on the pre-school and toddler curriculum to identify the key things that needed to be covered and to get consistency. What we were finding was that parents shift centers and were ending up having to repeat topics. So now during fall quarter the pre-school classes will focus on development and will cover four or five key concepts; the rest is open for group needs. Second quarter it is discipline, then self-esteem, and then parent growth needs. So parents can now switch centers, switch instructors, and not get the same material twice.

"Our curriculum is a priority for next year. I want us to have a conceptual framework on which to hang the curricula. I will never say to an instructor, 'teach this in your class.' But I want people to know where this program is coming from."

Coordination with the Public Schools

"When I first visited each of the elementary principals," said Mary Kurcinka, "they told me what the needs were. It was an elementary principal who said that we should offer classes at the apartment complex. They also all kept telling me that we need parent education regarding school readiness. So I reported that to the head of elementary education and suggested that we work together on it. He appointed a committee and now it's a tradition; we've been doing it for three years. The committee consists of a principal, kindergarten teachers, and ECFE staff. We offer a panel presentation, and we do outreach together. We offer it two nights a year and serve a total of 500 parents. ECFE provides child care for 80 or 90 children. The committee also recommended we have a kindergarten orientation, and now we have it. We made a video about our kindergarten curriculum that's now available to parents.

"Now I'm part of a committee regarding children who may be considered at risk. Membership includes special education, kindergarten teachers, principals and me. We've worked hard, every week after school from November into March. What's happening is that kindergarten people are saying that ECFE is what kindergarten should be. Traditionally, our kindergarten has been very academic. Currently they have no written statement of their philosophy or rationale. As the committee looked at the development that ECFE had just gone through and what we've written, we decided it would be good to do it for kindergarten too. So we're going to the School Board with a proposal that money be set aside for ECFE and kindergarten teachers to write a kindergarten rationale this summer. It's pretty exciting, now we're saying that teachers have the flexibility to go with the needs of the child and not totally with the curriculum to prepare them for first grade."

A second area of coordination between ECFE and K-12 involves teen parents. "This is a conservative community, so there's a pretty fine line here," said Kurcinka. "Initially, when we said that we

wanted to start a teen parent group, the answer from everyone was, 'we don't have any pregnancies.' But they've been hidden, so they disappear. The numbers have not been great enough so there is pressure to deal with them. It could be avoided because there might be one here, and another 15 miles away. They weren't connected. Because teen parents can't afford apartments, they stay spread out all over because they live at home with their parents.

"We started with the home economics teachers and the nurses because they are usually the first to know in the schools. We spent two months contacting agency people, the help line folks, getting names, calling kids and talking to them. Gradually we pulled it together. The district's commitment to doing this helped because they gave us the time to do outreach. The two ECFE staff who did all this work were not teaching; they were building the program. We serve teen parents who may or may not be in school or in the alternative program. We offer parenting classes. We also use speakers and cover family planning, drugs, AIDS; it's broader than what we would do in our other classes. We also cover paternity rights and visitation and how to access services in the community."

Linkage to the Community

Initially, Kurcinka "went out and talked to agency staff about the program. I talked to Public Health, Welfare, and staff at the Developmental Learning Center who served young children with disabilities. I also talked to the Community Action Council, which coordinates a number of services in the area, including the shelter for women. We're working with them to offer a class at the shelter.

"The Wilder Foundation from St. Paul has started a home-based support service in our community for families in which there is a risk of neglect or abuse. Right now they take referrals from Social Services. The demand for it is great; they have a waiting list. Next fall they hope to be able to take other referrals from us, and other programs.

"We will make referrals to them, but right now, offering this kind of service ourselves is not a priority. It's a very expensive service to offer. I would rather offer a class at an apartment complex because one of the keys is building connections between families. It is like a stress-release valve when parents can call each other and say, 'take my kids.'"

Funding

Total funding for ECFE has grown from $612,736 in 1986-87 to $706,027 in 1987-88. Currently, 43 percent of the revenue is derived from the local levy; 49 percent is state aid; six percent is from fees; and two percent comes from state vocational aid through the Technical Institute.

Mary Kurcinka considers future funding for ECFE to be moderately secure and expects it to continue to grow based primarily upon the population growth in the district.

Lessons from this Site

The Benefits of Being a Universal Program

"I think the greatest strength of this program is that it serves all families," says Mary Kurcinka. "It's not targeted, because it's everywhere. Not only do you educate the child and the child's parents, when you educate *all* parents, you educate their neighbors, friends, their relatives. You go home with that family. You build the support and you build the knowledge. It's in the playground, the neighborhood, the stores, the churches, when you've educated everyone. Yesterday I received a phone call from someone involved with social services who said, 'I was told by my neighbor that you're a good person to talk to about temper tantrums.' So I said, 'Tell me more.' She said it was a 3-year-old who's throwing terrible temper tantrums. I asked her what was happening before the tantrums? I found out that we were talking about a 19-year-

old single mom with three kids under three, two men involved in her life. The child was expressing the horrendous stress of this family. We ended up immediately moving her into our Thursday-night teen group. She said that she didn't have transportation. We said, 'Fine, we'll send a cab. That woman called me because her neighbor, who is not at risk, told her about our program. She called for another reason, but we are still the right place for that at-risk parent.

"As for our role, we must have classes to put that teen mother into, who is really struggling. We've got to have these basic classes. You can not put them into a mainstreamed pre-school class -- they wouldn't survive. So in our programming we've got to have a variety of levels of services. To that particular parent we provide a setting where she can learn about her kids, where she can get referral and resources. But, we do not counsel, we do not do other treatment types of things; however, often we're a coordinator of services. We say, 'Stay in this group, bring your kids.' That way we get to monitor the situation. Then we say, 'Here's a social worker, here's public health care, here's food, here's a transportation program.' Our staff makes them call about these things themselves, but they keep contact and get them to sign the permission that it's okay to share information. So very frequently, we are with the parent, know what is going on, and coordinate for them. I think that's appropriate. I don't think it's appropriate for us to be counseling; but I do think it is very appropriate for us to educate and support."

The Core Model

"We hold our classes on a weekly basis because of the demand," said Kurcinka. "If we let parents come two or three times a week, it would greatly limit the number of families we could serve. Our needs assessment also says that once a week is preferred by families. If it's a referral and a high-need family, then we might put them into two classes such as discipline and development, but otherwise parents are allowed to sign up for one class per quarter.

"Our needs assessment also tells us that we need to address the dual-employed families with our scheduling and services. Sixty-seven percent of those dual-employed families have children who are two and under, so we need to focus on that age group. The parents have been away from their children for the day, and they don't want to separate to go into parent discussion. So we will be looking at more activities that keep the parent and child together."

A Family Orientation

A distinguishing feature of the ECFE classes in District 196 is that the parent group may focus on pre-schoolers, but parents may bring all their children ages 0-5. "That's definitely distinctive of us and it's for both philosophical and financial reasons," said Mary Kurcinka. "In our children's program we focus on family skills such as communication, sharing, and problem solving. We demonstrate to parents how they can do activities with two or more kids. If we had parents come in with only one of their children, they might go home to two other children of different ages and think, 'This doesn't work, I can't do it.' But by bringing all the children in, they see a lot of different process materials: the water, the sand, the play-dough, the things that kids at different ages can use. We do it this way for many reasons. I think it gives parents a better picture of development. A parent comes in here and sees that his or her child is actually more like an 18-month-old instead of a 3-year-old. Another reason is that everybody's moving in here, they don't have neighbors that they can say, 'Will you take my kids on Tuesday and I'll take yours on Thursday?' They don't have those relationships yet. So they need to bring all of the kids. Another is space; we rent our space, so to rent a sibling room would be extra. Finally, I don't like the idea of a parent bringing in one child and giving him or her an education program while they stick their other children in a baby-sitting room. What's unique about ECFE is that it is our opportunity to serve families. The nursery schools can serve the 3-year-olds. You can get that 3-year-old or that 4-year-old program in other places. You can't get a family program anywhere else."

Licensure and Teacher Contracts

All of the ECFE teachers are part of the master agreement and are paid based on the scale for paying [K-12] teachers. Most ECFE staff, however, work less than full-time because they prefer the flexibility. "I've got people who I've offered more hours and they've said 'no.'" said Kurcinka. "They receive benefits, but if I told them they were full-time they would probably quit on me. The union finally recognized them this fall; sent them a letter that said they would pay dues. The issue of having a separate seniority list is negotiable within the union. The issue, of course, is that home economics teachers who are being laid off could potentially bump our people if they have the license. If there is a separate seniority list for ECFE people it protects the program; however, our people may not be able to carry their seniority over into K-12 if they wish.

"I think having teacher contracts has been critical as far as our acceptance by the principals and other teachers in the district. We are respected. It's very interesting when you talk to someone and they'll ask, 'Are your ECFE teachers on contract?' when I say, 'Yes, and they're in the union,' it's as if they count. For the profession, it is a tremendous door-opener. When we started, I used to have a principal sit on our hiring panel, just to get them used to who we were hiring. So they passed the word that we hire just like they do. So now we have credibility.

"In terms of licensure, we can still hire consultants and we can still do team teaching. There are ways around the licensure requirements that maintain credibility. The other thing is that we can use money from our budgets to buy some course work. I feel that ultimately, whether it's a black parent educator, or a Native American, if they want credibility, they need to have the credentials. I realize they may have mountains in front of them, but the issue is how do we support and help them. We can offer flexible scheduling and funds for more training. We can help build their confidence that they have the ability and strength to get the education."

Right now, Minnesota has just added two licenses for ECFE staff. Said Mary Kurcinka, "I can't understand why the universities haven't gotten their programs together yet. We're three years down the road and they are still filing with the state for programs. These licenses will be required a year from now. The course requirements have been changing, so the whole thing has been difficult."

Lack of Public School Space -- A Mixed Blessing

The ECFE program does have the financial resources to rent commercial space and purchase equipment. "Opening a center is costly," said Mary Kurcinka, "you literally have to buy everything. The district has helped us out by buying $36,000 worth of equipment out of capital outlay funds, but you're still talking thousands of dollars for desks, computers, phones, everything.

"ECFE is very flexible. We can program anywhere and any time of day. I'm not anxious to move into public school buildings. There are some real assets to being where we are located. I like that we are in the high school; that we have a combination of choices. But I don't think many teen parents want to be in the high school -- we get them easily into the shopping center site."

An Advisory Council with a Major Role

ECFE legislation specifies that over half of the membership in a required advisory council must be participating parents. When asked what role the council plays in District 196, Mary Kurcinka answered with one word: active. "It isn't another staff, but in some ways they function that way. They have all

volunteered to be on it. Their commitment is basically to one meeting a month, with child care provided during that time. They are not a policy or decision-making group; they offer recommendations. But, those recommendations are very much listened to. It is extremely rare that they ever make a recommendation that is not followed.

"They have been involved in everything. They helped design the first center, they helped pick the classes, they have worked on the scheduling, they sit on staff hiring committees. They will be reacting to our recent community needs assessment. They are one voice that we take our ideas to and ask them to tell us what we need to know from their perspective.

"They helped us on our most recent needs assessment which was done over the phone. The need for more programming on Friday nights and on the week-ends came out loud and clear. So, we've gotten the message and staff have already volunteered to take these classes. In the future, I'll hire people who will know they are taking a job that involves these hours.

"We had a parent come who had participated in another ECFE program that had sibling care. She asked us, 'Why don't you have sibling care, that's the way I want it to be.' So I said, 'Come out to the advisory council, this is the forum to air and talk about those issues.' Our attitude is that we will listen; we might not always agree, but we'll listen. I find that a lot of disagreement is defused this way."

District 191: Burnsville - Eagan - Savage

Community Education & Early Childhood Family Education: "I have been fortunate to work with the Community Education director and the manager of youth programs here. They are very supportive -- directive when necessary, but open to the kinds of things that I want to do. Because I don't have a lot of administrative experience, it was very important that I had them to go to and say, 'Well, I need some help . . . what about this?' After three months as a coordinator, I gave the director a list of goals and a plan for each one. Not all those goals have been met; some have changed; others have been met or exceeded. But the director is very appreciative of that kind of work attitude.

Cindy Check, ECFE Coordinator

Setting

District 191 is located 16 miles south of Minneapolis, and includes portions of Burnsville, Eagan, Savage, and very small sections of Apple Valley and Shakopee. In the early 1950s when rural schools were being closed and districts were consolidating, two Common School districts strongly objected to becoming part of a larger district that was being formed around the town center of Rosemount. Local citizens petitioned for release from the arrangement and formed District 191. The district lines were drawn to conform to property lines of local farms that formed the boundaries of the two Common School districts.

The extension of the highway system south from Minneapolis, and the resulting housing development, changed the character of the area from rural to suburban during the 1960s and 1970s. Areas where housing development occurred gradually incorporated into villages with boundaries that did not conform to the original boundaries of District 191.

District 191 has a total population of approximately 46,000 and enrolled 9,164 students during 1987-88. Population growth has been uneven across the district. District 191 currently finds itself with a closed elementary school in the eastern end of the district, which experienced early development, while elementary enrollment is increasing rapidly in the western end, due to the new construction of homes geared to the first-time home buyer. A bond issue has recently passed to build a new elementary school to serve the western portion of the district.

Cindy Check described the community as an upwardly mobile area. "Many families we serve could be considered 'middle class'. At-risk families make up a smaller percentage of families we currently serve." Less than five percent of the households are eligible for the WIC nutrition program offered through Public Health.

Community Education in District 191

Community Education is now in its fourteenth year in the district. Programming continues to build on two key concepts: 1) learning is a life-long activity, and 2) schools belong to the people. Beyond offering hundreds of enrichment and recreation activities to residents of all ages, Community Education also offers the following:

- basic education for adults as part of a consortium involving several neighboring districts (components include adult basic education, general education development and GED preparation, and English as a second language);
- senior citizen activities through a community center, offered in cooperation with the city of Burnsville;
- day-care, latch-key services, and a day-long summer program to assist working parents/guardians meet their child care needs;

- scheduling of the community use of facilities; and
- Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE).

The philosophy of Tom Lisec, the director of Community Education, is to offer "quality programs in a financially responsible manner." He views Community Education as "an enterprise. If we don't operate this department on a self-sustaining basis, the School Board will find someone else who can." He strives to have all programs operate in the black on a self-supporting basis. Surplus funds from successful programs cover shortfalls in others. In the future, he does not see the district's basic Community Education levy authority keeping pace with increasing overhead costs. For example, the 1987-88 general overhead, program development, and facilities-use areas exceeded their budgeted amounts. Lisec said that in the future, "More and more overhead expenses will need to be charged directly to programs."

General Community Education revenues in 1987-88 were $1.3 million; total expenses were just under that. Most of the program areas (except for senior citizens activities) broke even or ran a surplus. The ECFE program generated a healthy fund reserve ($197,000) that by law must be held for future use in ECFE activities.

Tom Lisec stresses comparability in administering ECFE in relation to other Community Education activities. He indicated that if the district levied the full amount for ECFE, "The total, dollarwise, would equal the whole Community Education budget. Currently, we don't need all this money. Fees are charged to participants in ECFE-type activities just as they are in other CE activities." Lisec believes that ECFE services should be only "somewhat subsidized through the levy. It flies in the face of our programming philosophy to give things away. We've never operated that way and I don't like to operate that way with ECFE programs."

History

"I've always had a personal interest in promoting programs for pre-school children," said Tom Lisec. "We had been doing these kinds of things for many years as part of Community Education." Prior to the ECFE legislation, District 191 offered parent education classes in cooperation with an area Technical Institute. During 1985-86, said Lisec, "We continued our relationship with the TI insofar as they funded the coordinator position for us. In year two, we severed our relationship and hired our own coordinator to continue the program. We didn't really need to rely on them any more and we thought we could manage the program fine with our own resources. We are still getting a few dollars from them. But they are getting the credit and state reimbursement for a program that we run. It really isn't worth the effort to do all the paperwork."

Since 1985, the ECFE program has had three coordinators. Many of the staff are new this year. Cindy Check, the current coordinator, remembers, "I came to District 191 in the spring of 1986 as a pre-school teacher in the regular Community Education pre-school program and worked under the youth programs manager. My background is in early childhood education. I have a bachelor's degree and worked in day care for a couple years before I came here. I currently have both an early childhood teaching license and a parent education license.

"My initial experience with Early Childhood Family Education in District 191 was in the fall of 1986 when I was given the responsibility for the program's monthly newsletter, *Hand in Hand*. I thoroughly enjoyed the writing, editing and development of the newsletter during the course of the year and often gave suggestions for future classes and program development. When the coordinator decided to leave the program, my supervisor encouraged me to interview for the position. I began as coordinator in August of 1987.

"My major role is to supervise what happens in ECFE. I set up all the classes, manage the staff, arrange all special events, bus tours, evening classes, outreach programs, do the monthly newsletter and the

quarterly brochure. I also teach two afternoons a week in the preschool program and have taught in the ECFE program in the past."

Goals of ECFE

ECFE in District 191 has adopted the following goals: 1) provide an opportunity to enhance and support parental skill in raising children from birth to kindergarten age; 2) aid the parent in meeting the child's emotional, intellectual, and physical needs; 3) provide a planned environment, conducive to learning and discovering, for both parent and child; 4) assist in methods of enhancing self-esteem; 5) provide a forum to share skills, ideas, and techniques of child rearing with other parents; and 6) encourage families to enjoy one another and have fun as a family.

"On a daily basis," said Cindy Check, these goals translate to "creating an environment where children learn to be accepting of individual differences, where they can mature socially, develop relationships with peers and other adults and build positive self-esteem." For parents, they mean "developing positive self-esteem and confidence in the choices that they, as parents, need to make. Overall, we want to encourage families to communicate; that's really the key. If a family has developed constructive ways to communicate, they are more likely to be able to solve problems that may arise."

Program Characteristics

Services

ECFE is currently organized into four major program components:

Parent-Child Learning Center (PCLC). Parent and child classes are held primarily at Cedar School, a former elementary school, now used to house an alternative program for high school drop-outs and a variety of Community Education and special education programs. A few classes and special events are offered at other sites throughout the school district, including a Methodist church and Burnsville High School.

Most classes meet one day per week for eight weeks, with a majority of the sessions scheduled for two hours during the morning and early afternoon hours. Less than one-fifth of the activities are scheduled during the evening hours, many targeted to fathers and their children. Fees for participation range from $15 to $20 per class. Fees for classes scheduled to meet fewer sessions are prorated. Child care is available for siblings during daytime classes for an additional fee ($12 for the first child; $3.50 for the second). Scholarships are available for families in financial need. Cindy Check said that "few parents request scholarships."

Classes are scheduled by developmental ages of children. The Pat-A-Cake Club is designed for parents having a child 0-24 months. Specific classes are targeted to children 0-5 months, 6-15 months, and 16-24 months. Other classes are offered for Parents and Twos, Parents and Threes, and Parents and Preschoolers.

Sessions are two hours in length and follow a similar format: 1) an interaction period when parents and their children participate in age-appropriate activities together; 2) parents separate for 'adults only' discussion with a parent educator while children participate in age appropriate activities with early childhood staff; and 3) parents and their children meet together with staff for a closing song. The Pat-A-Cake Club classes use a modified format in which parents meet in the same classroom where their children can engage in supervised activities with staff.

Special Events. In addition to regular PCLC class sessions, special events are offered throughout the year. Some are free, others require a small fee collected at the door. The variety of family activities includes seasonal parties, music and drama activities, and gym nights. According to Cindy Check, "We

usually have many more families attending the events than we expect. It's great to have such interest in the community although it can be difficult to plan for large events. The entire ECFE staff works together and they do a terrific job. This fall we had four special events. They take a lot of staff planning time and financial resources, but when these events are held, we gain positive feedback and parental support for what we are doing in ECFE. Because we are accountable for the money we spend on these events, it can be time-consuming to work with the district accounting department. The systems in place work well for the K-12 program; however, the spontaneity often found in Community Education events can make our work with the accounting department a little more difficult. It is essential when planning our events to provide them with adequate lead time to receive any checks we may need. Occasionally staff will pick up necessary items for an event and are reimbursed for them. Our events are usually held at Burnsville High School. We use the cafeteria there because the amount of space allows us to hold a wide variety of activities during an event. We did hold our Halloween party at Cedar School and it worked well."

Special seminars just for parents (one or two sessions) are also scheduled each quarter, primarily during the evening. Topics have included speech and language development, handling infant and child medical emergencies, sleep and discipline, and going to kindergarten.

Activity Times for the Pre-School Child. A variety of special parent and child classes are scheduled each quarter. These offerings account for approximately half of the overall ECFE program. Specific offerings for one quarter included: storytelling, science, gymnastics, gym and swimming, and a dad and kids night. Many of these activities are single session (1-1/2 hour) events, scheduled during the day and evening hours, others may run two to four sessions. All are hands-on activities involving parent participation with their child. Pre-registration is required. Fees range from $3 to $15 depending upon the number of sessions.

Cindy Check described her attitude, and that of Community Education in Burnsville as: "Let's look at what people typically want to do, and then expand on it. Everybody thinks we ought to serve at-risk people. There's no doubt that's part of what ECFE should be. I think our view is let's do a lot of fun things, too. Let's encourage people to want to come and learn about parenting, period.

"Helen Kaluza, the manager of youth programs, has been very helpful in getting pediatricians involved to offer seminars. She's the kind of person who does things on the spur of the moment and can just come up with these things off the top of her head. My view of ECFE is similar to hers: let's do what parents want us to do. Let's do things people will take. What's the sense of setting up this somber class on children who are having difficulty socially if nobody's going to take it? It doesn't make any sense. There are other ways to work that into the program if you have a child who has some special needs. But I think the way programs are presented to parents has a very big effect on how enrollment goes."

Outreach and Cooperative Programming. In 1987-88 ECFE staff have provided single events and parenting classes on an itinerant basis in a number of settings. ECFE cooperates with the Dakota County WIC nutrition program to provide services twice a month at their center. Staff have offered parenting classes to students enrolled in the Alternative Learning Center and those attending ABE/GED classes through the Minnesota Valley ABE Project. ECFE also operates the New American Families program in cooperation with ESL classes primarily for Southeast Asian refugees.

Participants

ECFE served 400 parents and 455 children in classes during 1987-88. A total of 625 parents and 650 children participated in a class and/or a special event. Approximately 90 percent of the parents participating in classes were female. Cindy Check estimates that 19 percent of the eligible population in District 191 were served through ECFE. Approximately 65 of these parents were single and 15 were teen parents.

Cindy Check feels the program is primarily reaching "middle-class America. We are serving some families who could be called at-risk. We have had referrals from Dakota, Inc., an agency that works with parents who have young, developmentally delayed children. We integrate them into one of our regular classes. I think it's very critical that our attitude be accepting of everyone that comes into the program. But we clearly need to get information about how to deal with it. What is really nice about being in the same building with Dakota is being able to say, 'I'm dealing with this family, help! Give me some tips on how to deal with the child alone, or how can I guide this mom into doing this kind of activity with her child?'"

Curriculum

"At the beginning of each quarter," explained Cindy Check, "we ask the parents attending classes at PCLC what their concerns are, what kinds of things they want to talk about. They check things off on a form and then our instructors use our resource files to pull hand-outs and information. We have a lot of books and curriculum resources from vocational education. Our parent educators use a lot of the books from the library we have for parents. Occasionally staff use a videotape that applies to what they're doing. This quarter, instructors did less asking and just chose the topics."

Gradually, parent educators are developing a curriculum that guides them in all their classes. Class listings may specify the particular themes to be covered during the semester. But, according to Cindy Check, "We were running into the situation where three people sign up for Sexuality in the Young Child and 25 people want How to Parent. You have to call them up and say, 'Well, the only thing you can take is How to Parent,' because that's where we have the enrollment. There's a value to just saying this class is about parenting. You don't put any unnecessary structures on the group before they get there, then you ask what they want to cover."

In terms of the children, "Our early childhood staff has spent a lot of time developing some things for this year. It is not a written curriculum. We use a variety of resource books that probably most teachers have at their disposal. We don't have any kits. I'm not a real big believer in that kind of learning. I think it's most appropriate to use a wide variety of resources.

"Currently I'm taking a curriculum development class and writing a curriculum as another resource for the program. It's based around language and communication that will involve the use of stories. We will read a story at the beginning of class. The parent-child activities will be an extension of the 'story of the day'. When parents and children rejoin after discussion, the same story can be told in a different way. An instructor may tell the story as a flannel book at the start of class and a picture book at the end of class. Children start to develop a good sense of reading in terms of listening and enjoyment. Sending parent handouts home with follow-up activities can also build communication skills. That's a critical part of this curriculum. The early childhood instructors won't be required to use the curriculum. It will be another resource for them."

Cindy Check believes the new curriculum will help in recruitment of parents. "I think parents tend to look at the class offerings now and say, 'I'll go to ECFE this quarter because I didn't get into something else', or 'I'll go this quarter but in the winter I'm not going to go because it's too cold.' I think we need to help parents see it as an experience that can go from September to May, and summer if you want it to. If the curriculum is built around something, parents can say, 'Wow, this is really helpful. It's not just my child playing. There is really something behind it.'"

Coordination with the Public Schools

ECFE coordinates with the public schools by providing parent education classes to targeted groups of parents involved with other programs in the district. Examples include the Alternative Learning Center, and the Adult Basic Education and ESL programs offered through Community Education.

A number of single and multiple session activities are also offered to parents and preschool age children who are interested in learning about the kindergarten program in District 191. Topics include entrance requirements, the kindergarten curriculum, registration, separation anxiety, and things parents can do to help their children succeed.

Linkage to the Surrounding Community

ECFE is involved with other agencies in the community for outreach in order to recruit participants and to provide parenting classes to families who are considered hard to reach. ECFE also co-sponsors, advertises, and collects fees for parent-child classes targeted to infants and young toddlers that are offered at a local hospital once a week for six weeks. ECFE contributes funds for a portion of the instructors' salaries.

"Mary Hilliard, from the Fairview Ridges Hospital is the program coordinator," said Cindy Check. The emphasis during the classes at Ridges is somewhat different, as is the format. Parent discussion is held in the classroom; however, parents are responsible for supervising their own children during the entire class. Hilliard developed the curriculum for the Ridges program. Each week has specific developmental topics and tasks. Mary Hilliard describes her program as "running very independently of ECFE. It runs just fine without ECFE involvement."

"Someone on our advisory council brought up an issue concerning our cooperation at the Fairview Ridges hospital," said Cindy Check. "The issue concerned whether we were duplicating programs by offering infant and toddler classes at regular ECFE sites and supporting the Ridges program. One regular ECFE site cannot handle all the families in the community with infants and toddlers. We are able to refer families to the Ridges program when it is appropriate and can also offer a wider variety of programs through our cooperation."

Funding

The ECFE program spent $114,000 in 1987-88; revenues of $290,000 were collected. Major sources of revenue included funds generated through the local levy (78 percent), state aid (17 percent) and fees (5 percent). According to Tom Lisec, "I'm embarrassed by the amount that is available to ECFE . It's too much. Basically because we had a reasonable program before the levy, I supported the notion of some additional funding. With the levy we are able to do some things that we could not easily do before -- some of our outreach to special groups. Overall, our needs are less than what we could generate through the levy."

Lessons from this Site

Survival of a Fledgling Program

"Because I was new this year and almost all the staff members are new, it's been a real year of survival for us," said Cindy Check. "It's been, 'get through the quarter and then think about what needs to be done for the next quarter, and then get through that.' We've been able to look only as far as we can see rather than long-range planning. I think that the really crucial thing to any program is to have some

sort of a plan, and there's not been enough consistency in who's been sitting behind this desk in the last three years to provide any sort of a long-range plan. You cannot do the kinds of programs that we want to do without some of that long-range planning. For example, we want to link up with the pre-school program to offer monthly parent workshops for parents whose children are in Tiny-Tots. We did a survey, and people are really for it. But, without some sort of a plan to say to people at the beginning of the year, 'Here you go, this is what we're going to do,' you lose them. Plans are meant to be changed, and you can do things on the spur of the moment, but overall we need to have a process by which we plan the things we want to coordinate."

Reliance on an Established Model

According to Cindy Check, "Parent/child classes meeting once a week have been the standard format in Early Childhood Family Education. In fact, ECFE is often equated with that type of class. Parents are generally willing and able to make a once-a-week time commitment and it's an appropriate amount of time spent within a group setting for many families."

Check went on to say that any direction from the state on policies come "in a letter, every month or two months, telling us what's happening. There's nobody knocking on the door and saying, 'What are you doing this quarter? I want to see what you're doing.' You can call and ask if something falls under ECFE but then if you find out it doesn't, you wish you never called. We called about a class in which the instructor works with parents to teach swimming. The answer was 'No, that doesn't fall under ECFE.' We asked why it doesn't, and the answer was that it just doesn't. Who's to say that a class about planting and growing things that involves parents is more important than a parent teaching his or her child to swim? Now doing a special event that includes face painting is a lot of fun, and that's probably it. But those kinds of events are designed to get people in who say, 'Hey, this is great, what else do you have?'"

Recruitment

Currently, many participants hear about ECFE in District 191 from the newsletters and brochures. 'Bring a Friend' days and special events for families have also been used to increase overall enrollment.

Check has relied on outreach to special groups (an afternoon group held at a trailer court, WIC, the Alternative Learning Center, Dakota Inc.) and on providing information about programming to staff in community agencies to attract families that might be considered at-risk. Check finds that at-risk parents "might not feel comfortable pursuing something that may help them with parenting. If someone they trust says that ECFE might be really good, parents may be more willing to try it."

Clearly, the need for carefully planned outreach to enhance participation of all types of families in the community requires extra resources and time. It would be difficult to fund a program that also serves at-risk families based totally on fees, without any additional funding through a levy, state aid, or grants. "I see outreach as a critical part of this district's expansion of ECFE. I plan to hire an outreach educator to continue our focus and efforts to bring services to all types of families. This year we didn't have one, and it has made it difficult to do the necessary outreach," she concluded.

Responsive Parenting Education

Even though District 191 is a growing suburban area that is considered a homogeneous middle-class area, parent educators tailor their approaches and materials to meet the needs of a particular group.

Pat Carlson, a parent educator, finds that breaking one group down into smaller groups of three allows for more active participation. Her evening class enrolls a mix of mothers and fathers, including some

lower income families who live in an area trailer park. In the small groups, parents talk about disciplining their children and how hard it is to find something that works. When everyone returns to the large group, participation comes slowly. Pat listens carefully and gives the parents time to form their thoughts before speaking. When a few parents openly express frustration with their children, she is non-judgmental and asks the group if anyone else has dealt with the same situation.

The next morning, Pat is facilitating a group of 10 mothers who, she says, have become a very strong group. "They are middle-class mothers, many with college educations. I am able to approach them more as a class." The group is working through the book *Children: The Challenge*. Pat asks them to relate what they have read to their own histories and current relationships to their children. Discussion is open and lively. Differing views are offered, but the group seems to accept differences in individual approaches to discipline.

Coordination Across District and County Jurisdictions

One of the difficulties of arranging services with agencies that serve families on a county-wide basis is working cooperatively across school district boundaries. Cindy Check explained, "I guess there's a little bit of tension between neighboring districts here because we're both Dakota County districts. There's some question about who should serve the shelter for battered women. One of the issues is that we hire our staff under different arrangements. We simply could not be flexible enough to complement what the other district could do. We had a parent educator available, but not an early childhood teacher. They just could not provide the other one because they have their staff on contract and aren't able to be flexible. So we had to say, 'Sorry, but we have to step out then because we don't have the type of person needed.'"

Comparability in Employment

"The employment practices in ECFE are consistent with Community Education as a whole in District 191. That's something that both Tom and Helen felt was very important," said Cindy Check. "Our pay scales are roughly established the same way -- the part-time status, the amount of preparation time -- that's fairly standard across programs within Community Education here. Pre-school teachers who work in Community Education are all certified staff with early childhood backgrounds. Some of them actually meet more of the ECFE requirements than some of our ECFE staff at this point. So it's been an issue to keep everyone somewhat comparable. There are two ways of looking at it: one way is to say we all have the same amount of education, we're all required to continue our education in order to keep a license, so we should be paid the same. Another thing is, ECFE comes with a lot of funding, whereas the pre-school programs must be entirely self-sufficient. ECFE does require the license and pre-school does not -- it is preferable but they don't have to have it -- so there is an area where you could say, let's pay ECFE a little bit more." Salaries will be substantially increased for the 1988-89 year. They will then be comparable to many districts in the area, though not comparable with a district that has ECFE staff on the master teacher contract.

District 77: Mankato, North Mankato, Skyline, Eagle Lake, Madison Lake

Community Education & Family Support and Education: "The transition of the ECFE program to being under Community Education did not occur until this past year, even though the funds have flowed through Community Education for the past five years. I still didn't feel affiliated with Community Education and continued to talk to the curriculum director about any problems. We began to make the transition after the shift in Community Education directors. It has been more than positive. Tom Anderson, the new director, realizes that we are a part of his program and he can't just rubber stamp things. He has a real philosophical commitment to what we're doing and doesn't see the ECFE program as just a frill. Also, I think our program is about a third of the total CE budget. We have always been linked to K-12 in terms of salary issues or use of facilities. But Tom is the first Community Education person to really take an interest in our budget, grant proposals, or publicity. He has left other policy issues with me, the staff, and the parents on our advisory council. Overall, I'd have to say the relationship depends upon the individuals who are involved, not the organizational structure."

Abby Draper, ECFE Coordinator

Setting

Independent School District 77 includes the communities of Mankato, North Mankato, Skyline, Eagle Lake, Madison Lake and adjacent rural areas, totaling 139 square miles. During 1987-88, the public schools enrolled 7,611 students; an additional 1500 students enrolled in Catholic or Lutheran school systems.

Mankato and North Mankato are located approximately 85 miles southwest of Minneapolis/St. Paul at the junction of the Blue Earth and Minnesota Rivers. The location of these communities at the bend of the Minnesota River made it an ideal stopping place for steamboat passengers and freight traffic during the 1800s.

The surrounding area is one of the richest agricultural areas in the nation, with one of the highest records of retail sales per capita in the upper midwest. "Economically, the area is healthy," said Abby Draper, the ECFE coordinator. "We do not have large pockets of poverty or under-educated people. Crime is not a major problem." Currently Mankato and North Mankato have 437 low and moderate income housing units within the city limits. The number of units occupied by families with young children is not clear.

Mankato serves as the medical center for south central Minnesota and northern Iowa. Tom Anderson, the director of Community Education, added that the area "is rich in community resources including a YMCA, a YWCA, a symphony orchestra, an arts center and theatre, and many youth and adult special interest organizations."

The area is also exceptionally rich in post-secondary opportunities including: the Mankato Technical Institute, Rasmussen Business College, Bethany Lutheran College and Mankato State University, the largest of the seven state universities in Minnesota.

The Mankato/North Mankato area remains racially homogenous: 97.4 percent of the population is white, primarily of Scottish, German, Scandinavian and Welsh decent.

Community Education in District 77

"Community Services is currently in a transition here," said Tom Anderson, the new director. "This department is evolving from primarily offering recreational services to meet the needs of the community in this area.

"In the past we offered Community Education activities on an a la carte basis. Our publications would list hundreds of activities; if people signed up, the class actually ran. I'd estimate that less than 40 percent of our class offerings were ever held. Now I'm trying to shift the whole program to be more focused on the expressed needs of adults and children in our community. I would rather that we offer fewer options -- but they be better developed so that a much higher percentage actually run.

"I don't see our Community Services program becoming some superstructure. I would really like it to be a process -- working in conjunction with the community to make things happen. I think we are still working to become an integral part of the school district."

Currently, programs and activities offered through Community Services include:

- Public recreation (supervision of public playgrounds, aquatics, extensive adult and youth athletic activities, swimming, and management of an ice arena);
- a municipal marching band;
- adult general interest classes;
- adult and youth field trips;
- academic services (adult basic education, GED testing, K-12 summer school, and English as a second language);
- facilities scheduling;
- community theater; and
- Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE).

During 1987-88 the total budget for Community Services was $579,547, including ECFE. Sources of funds were as follows: community levy (48 percent); fees and charges (32 percent); state aid (15 percent); and grants (5 percent).

Philosophy and Goals

The ECFE program in District 77 is based on the belief that what happens at home does make a difference in a child's life. The philosophy of the parent discussion groups offered as part of ECFE are based on several assumptions: 1) most parents love their children; 2) these parents aspire to provide what is best for their children; and 3) most parents do not see themselves as active teachers of their own children.

The major goals of ECFE are to support the development of an awareness that a parent is his/her child's first teacher; to provide an environment for parents to share information, stimulate ideas, offer encouragements, and support parents as teachers of their own children; and to provide parents with the opportunity to learn about their own child's development in general.

"The philosophy of the program was well established when I was hired," said Abby Draper. "I had been a nursery school teacher before coming to ECFE. It's very hard not to be judgmental about parenting. We really try, however, to be accepting of people where they are at and try to instill that in the staff. Here's an example. We were trying to develop some kind of position on spanking. Many staff are against corporal punishment; one staff member was more fundamentalist in his beliefs. We all agreed that we didn't want to turn off any parent. So we decided to think of parenting as an art. Each of us has a different viewpoint or set of values about what we like. It's the same thing with parenting. We need to respect the differences in viewpoints and values that we bring to a parenting situation. The bottom line is that all staff live by our overall philosophy or they don't stay here."

History

Bob Nelson, the director of curriculum and one of the original developers of ECFE in District 77, remembered, "In the early 1970s principals were saying in staff meetings that more and more kids were experiencing difficulties -- more behavior problems, lack of adequate clothing, coming to school without having had a good breakfast. Principals were feeling that somehow, in order for learning to take place, children had to come in with a stronger background. We recognized that the schools couldn't get in the business of feeding and clothing children. But we could work more with parents: support and help them to be better parents. We didn't know how we were going to do this. It was at this point that ECFE was initiated by the state as a competitive grant program.

"Four people worked on our proposal: a person from Mankato State University in early childhood, two elementary principals, and myself. We were funded in 1975-76 and became one of the 13 original pilot sites. We hired a director, and basically the program was developed by school people. We sent staff to High/Scope in Michigan for training. Plus, we built a lot of our own curriculum.

"The program has always been aimed at parents. We tried to identify parents who wanted help and support. We've always been very clear that it wasn't day care and that children must participate ***with*** their parents. The home visiting component was added and came basically from High/Scope. Later we added the use of parent volunteers as home visitors. There has never been any active opposition to the program; rather, I remember just a lack of interest from the medical community. Social Services and the courts started to make referrals. The hospital auxiliary was concerned when we got into pre-school screening because they had been offering this service."

Abby Draper, the current ECFE coordinator, remembered that the program "started at one site in a lower-income neighborhood of Mankato. Gradually, the program expanded to include approximately 15 classes located at a few elementary schools in the district. The funding peaked at over $200,000 at one point. But the budget was down to $54,000 by the time I was hired in 1983." Nelson added, "As the money through CQE dried up, we were able to get some additional funding through Community Education in the district and from the vocational system."

"The district really wanted to keep the program going," said Abby Draper, "but could not offer local financial support. At the time, we were facing financial problems in the district due to declining enrollments. The parents were very committed to keeping the program alive and engaged in a massive letter-writing campaign to the Legislature when statewide funding was being considered." When statewide funding was approved, ECFE classes quickly expanded in the district.

Program Characteristics

Services

Approximately 35 parent and child classes are offered each term throughout the morning, afternoon, and evening hours at a Family Learning Center located in a former public school building now used for special school programs. Classes are also offered at three satellite locations: a community center located in another former public school building in Mankato (nine classes); Eagle Lake Elementary School (one class); and a church site in Madison Lake (one class). Registration fees range from $8 to $20 per class depending upon the number of sessions (usually five to eight per quarter during the school year). Full or partial scholarships are available upon request for families who feel they are unable to pay.

Classes meet weekly for 1 1/2 hours and are scheduled according to the developmental age of the child (infants, toddlers, twos/threes, twos, threes/fours, and fives). Many classes are organized so that parents participate with one of their children. Sibling care is provided for other pre-school age children in the

family for a small fee ($5 per family per term). In classes designed for children of mixed ages, parents may attend with all of their pre-school age children.

A small number of classes target single parents or fathers and their two- to five-year-old children; or cover specific topics, such as family communication and self esteem, discipline, or fathering in the 1980s.

Parent and child classes follow a similar format: 1) opening songs followed by a time for parents to spend with their children in child-centered activities; 2) children continue to play under the supervision of early childhood staff while parents participate in a group discussion in a separate room; and 3) parents, children, and ECFE staff close with a song.

Three specialized services offered through ECFE include:

1. Weekly home visiting with parents whose situation prevents them from attending a center-based class. Approximately 12 parent volunteers serve as home visitors and participate in weekly parent-to-parent training and support sessions that are facilitated by an ECFE staff member.
2. An additional weekly two-hour session for three- to five-year-old children who are enrolled in a center-based class with their parents. The children participate in field trips, cooking experiences, and other special activities.
3. ECFE subsidizes the salary of a district staff person who works with pregnant teens and teen parents and offers a parent-child class on a daily basis. The young women attend an alternative education program while their children are cared for in a child care setting located at the community center in Mankato.

Additional services offered through ECFE include special events (11 during 1987-88), a newsletter sent to all parents of pre-schoolers in District 77, a toy- and book-lending library located at the Family Learning Center, a three session parent and child orientation for children who will enter kindergarten the following year, and coordination of the district's pre-school screening of children.

Participants

Participation in ECFE is still showing a moderate increase from year to year in District 77. In 1986-87, an estimated 799 parents and 972 children participated in a class or special event (33 percent of the eligible population). In 1987-88 a total of 706 parents and 1,059 children participated in ECFE (37 percent of the eligible population). Each year, approximately 20 to 25 of the parents are single and of these, 10 to 12 are teen mothers.

"The issue of income has always been pretty low-key in this community," said Abby Draper. "We've been able to integrate lower-income parents referred by the court system with the wives and children of physicians. There is a real acceptance of all types of families."

Curriculum

Curriculum for children draws from a variety of sources. The emphasis is consistently on the use of developmentally appropriate activities in the following areas: sensory, language, cognitive, and motor. Similarly, topics and materials used in group sessions with parents draw from a variety of sources. Parents typically check off particular topics on a needs-assessment form distributed at the beginning of a series of classes.

Parents train as home visitors using the High/Scope Parent-to-Parent model and materials. An ECFE staff person meets weekly with the parent volunteers to facilitate the sharing of common issues and to support the volunteers' efforts.

Coordination with Public Schools

ECFE coordinates with the K-12 program in four areas: 1) offering pre-kindergarten orientation sessions for parents and children; 2) providing funding for parent education classes offered to pregnant teens and teen parents enrolled in the alternative high school program; 3) using a kindergarten room in Eagle Bend to offer an evening parent-child class once a week; and 4) coordinating the pre-school screening efforts of the district.

Linkage to the Surrounding Community

ECFE is linked to other local and county social service agencies for outreach purposes, including dissemination of information about ECFE services and the exchange of referrals. Because the ECFE advisory council is composed almost entirely of participating parents, the advisory council does not function as a formal link to these agencies.

Bimonthly publications from the Minnesota Extension Service regarding young families are prominently displayed on a rack in the room used for group discussions by parents.

Funding

The total ECFE budget was $224,568 in 1986-87 and grew to $262,584 in 1987-88. Approximately 47 percent of the revenue is through the local levy; 38 percent is state aid; 16 percent comes from fees and other sources. Abby Draper indicated that the district has "not yet levied the full amount that is allowable under the current legislation -- we will next year."

Lessons

Flexibility in Shaping a Program

Abby Draper cited three key factors that have shaped the ECFE program in District 77: 1) having adequate funding through the levy and state aid; 2) having administrative support in the district; and 3) having flexibility in staffing. "Because our teachers are not on contract, we can afford to try different things. If it flops, we can cancel the activity and not pay staff for it. So we can be very creative and try different things. We're offering a class on discipline that I didn't think would go. But we've been able to fill it!

"Early on in the pilot days, we had many more professionals in the community on our advisory council who helped to shape the program. We mostly have parents on the council now. We used to run three eight-week terms. Now we lengthened the fall term because parents wanted to start when their older children started school. We have fine-tuned how we schedule the classes for different developmental ages of children. We started our pre-kindergarten orientation classes because parents were telling us that they didn't know if their children were ready to start school.

"The bottom line is that the parents have to come. We tried a targeted class for families with young handicapped children. It went for one term and just fizzled. I guess we tried to make these parents into a group thinking that the issue of parenting is universal --- but the needs and demands of their children are so different. One child was very hyperactive, another was severely developmentally delayed, another was physically handicapped but not at all intellectually impaired. The group was just at a different emotional level regarding parenting; we couldn't tailor the children's activities enough to meet such diverse needs. But the base of financial support through the levy has given us the chance to try all these different things."

"It's difficult to go out and find these families as a group," said Abby Draper. "Mankato does have some lower- to moderate-income housing areas -- but it's not like the ghettoes in the cities. We talked at one point about basing some services at the social agencies but there is no space. We could do more outreach at the WIC nutrition clinic but families come in on a staggered basis. We would not be able to offer a group.

"We've done door-to-door recruitment in the lower-income areas of the city. We go to the mall at least once or twice a year and spend a day signing up parents. We get referrals from community agencies. We coordinate pre-school screening, so some families are identified that way.

"The only way I really have to determine which families we serve are experiencing stress is to consider family income. We had about 550 children last term and 28 families on scholarship. I think there are many more families out there we are not serving. The truly at-risk, the abusive family, those living in chronic poverty, we don't see them unless it is a court referral. We get about five or six of those a year. The courts may tell parents to go out and find parent education services. We're really the only formal resource for it in this community. Other agencies may offer things, but they also come and go or are kind of piecemeal. So there are not a lot of places for parents to go.

"The School Board, or our critics, or people who don't understand the program will dwell on the at-risk family and ask us how many we are fixing. But I really believe that everyone needs support in parenting. Child abuse or even having unrealistic expectations for children is not restricted to just *those* parents. I think that ECFE is for all families. But I will say that serving families know to be at-risk requires more money, more intensive efforts, and more heartache and headaches.

"I don't discount the importance of serving the at-risk; but I also think we must continue to stress the importance of serving all parents. We have to make hard decisions about whether we can turn that severely stressed family around with an ECFE-type service. Do I spend $10,000 a year dealing with a few families -- or $10,000 a year with over 100 families? This is one of the hardest parts of the job for me.

"Finally, we always have to be aware of our limitations. We are not professional counselors or therapists. We need to know when to step back and we need to realize that we can fail with a family sometimes. Often we're not the only ones working with the family, but the whole thing will just break down and the court steps in and removes the children from the home."

Staff Recruitment

"I think of the staff as being veterans," said Abby Draper. "But when I looked at it the other day, I realized that only four of the 33 staff we have now were here when I started five years ago. Our parent educators have really come through our parent-to-parent volunteer program and also participated as parents themselves. It's been great to hire people who already know what the program is all about.

"Our early childhood people have been fairly easy to recruit. This program pays very well for a job in early childhood education that is also part-time. If people were on a teaching contract, I don't think they would get better money. We currently pay $13.25 an hour with the number of hours of preparation being equal to contact time. I think that is good money in this field. They work hard in preparation so I think the wages are deserved. But I think it is symbolically important that we recognize and pay for prep time. A few of the staff started in para-professional positions with us. I watched them for a year and then moved them into the early childhood area because they had the credentials.

"I've actively started to recruit people as specialists in particular developmental age groups. I can't send five people to hear Burton White, so [I send one, and then] all of a sudden I have an infant specialist, a toddler specialist and so on. We've broken out responsibilities.

"I hate to see the new licensure requirements limit our use of people with special topics licenses. Right now I have a registered nurse offering the classes for infants. She developed a whole curriculum for us. After 1989 she will not be able to teach for us unless she goes back to get the appropriate license.

"I think we need strict licensure requirements. We need it for the profession. The early childhood licensure requirements are not the problem for me. I've always hired licensed people and they are readily available because of the proximity of the state university. But programming for infants is a grey area for me because an RN can offer so much to parents. Also, I have used men to teach our dads and children classes -- they tend to have other jobs as elementary teachers or psychologists. I won't be able to do that any more unless they have the particular license, or they are hired as consultants. It's been a feminine profession. I probably have one of the few men who is licensed as a parent educator working for me. They are rare, rare, rare.

"I think that ECFE staff are somewhat different than other people working in Community Education. They must be licensed to conform to state requirements. They are paid more per hour. But Community Education is also changing. We now have adult basic education and ESL. The classes are no longer just enrichment."

How a Voluntary Program Can Affect Labor Relations

"Our teachers are not under contract with the school district," said Abby Draper. "So we have a more give-and-take relationship on salary issues. I bargain for my staff. I think this is a real plus. We have operated our budget in the black every year after the levy structure was approved. I am able to look at the revenue available and say that my priority is to the staff, even before myself. Obviously, I can't recommend 20 percent salary increases. But I can ask for six percent and will end up with four or five percent.

"We're able to avoid a lot of labor relations issues by not having people on contract. Our K-12 teachers have not settled their contract after 15 months. The ECFE staff have been able to settle. I think that the lack of respect the community may have for teachers is a perception they are in education just for the money. I do believe teachers are worth more than they receive. But it would be very difficult for us to maintain the intimate relationship we have with families if we said we're going out on strike. Also, K-12 teachers don't have to sell themselves. Parents must send their children to school. ECFE is relatively new and voluntary. The parents are our consumers. If ECFE staff were on contract, they would have to go out on strike if the teachers did. We would alienate the community, our parents, and possibly kill the program."

Relationship to K-12

"We have to be very aware of our situation," commented Abby Draper. "The children in this program come to a very enriched environment. We have the funds to buy all kinds of equipment. Staff have the time to decorate the rooms. We have a ratio of two staff for every 12 children. Kindergarten classes can have 20 to 25 children in them. Teachers don't have the same freedom to purchase equipment and supplies as the ECFE staff."

Bob Nelson, the curriculum director, added that "Tension between the kindergarten teachers and ECFE was a major hurdle for us to get over. It was not a difference of philosophy; rather, it was around practical issues, such as ECFE using the kindergarten classrooms for activities. Also, there was some feeling

that ECFE staff were usurping the kindergarten curriculum as they put together activities for the children as they came in with their parents. These were some of the same things that were being used in the kindergarten classrooms. I think these issues are behind us now, but it would have been better to bring the teachers together with ECFE immediately."

State-Level Capacity

Abby Draper commented on the role the state has played in program development: "I find that Minnesota has many low cost inservice opportunities for staff -- through vocational education, associations and the state department of education. I circulate the announcements to staff and we generally pay for any registration fee and travel. I am also able to bring people in to staff meetings to cover certain things. Staff can take advantage of activities offered through the university."

Freshwater-Woodland Cooperative: Browerville, Clarissa, Eagle Bend, Long Prairie, Motley, Pillager, Staples (Reorganized as the Freshwater Education District, effective 7/1/88)

Community Education & Early Childhood Family Education: "This year I was supervised by the director of special education for the Cooperative. But who do I report to? It's been a little touchy. I try to keep everyone informed. A lot of what I do is through our ECFE advisory council. Then I report to the Freshwater-Woodland Cooperative Board. The Community Education directors from Staples and Long Prairie are on my advisory council. The other Community Education people have been asked to be on the council, but really only 10 or 20 percent of their salaries come from CE funds. They hold other positions [superintendent, principal, teacher] in their respective districts, and have never really gotten involved on a day-to-day basis with ECFE.

"I think the rationale for having ECFE run on a cooperative basis is that the districts could save on administration and put the ECFE funds back into the local communities. Because I also work in special education, my salary is split between ECFE and special education."

Mary Jo Hofer, ECFE Coordinator

Setting

The seven school districts collaborating through the Freshwater-Woodland Cooperative to provide ECFE services are located primarily in Todd County in the central part of Minnesota, 120 to 150 miles northwest of Minneapolis/St. Paul. Like many rural school districts in Minnesota and the U.S., these districts have been particularly challenged by federal and state mandates regarding increased educational opportunities for all children and youth. In fact, these communities have found it difficult just to maintain the integrity of their K-12 programs for a number of reasons. First, districts have experienced decline in already small student populations that is projected to continue. Enrollments have declined by approximately 10.5 percent in Todd County between 1977 and 1987. Five of the seven districts cooperating to provide ECFE services each enrolled fewer than 500 students (pre-K through 12) in 1987-88. Two districts had larger enrollments: Long Prairie enrolled 1,031; Staples enrolled 1,490. Second, a major decline in the rural agricultural economy has resulted in substantial reductions in farm values and farm income. This economic decline has led to the third issue, a decrease in the resources to fund basic educational services in the schools. Earl Mergens, the director of special education, added that "The train that goes through Staples hauls coal. Recently, the local crew of engineers and conductors pulled out. That's a loss of 22 solid jobs and incomes in this area. It will be felt all over town."

Overall, the area is racially homogenous; approximately 98 percent of the population is white. A social worker from Todd County Social Services reflected, "I grew up in this area. We have different pockets, Scandinavian, Polish-German-Catholic. The population tends to be very conservative, with a strong work ethic. I think we have a high rate of alcoholism and high rates of stress-related problems but it is not really recognized. We're not in a situation where counseling is looked at as something healthy and positive."

Minnesota legislation actively encourages rural school districts to utilize various organizational structures to change and improve educational conditions. Legislation allows for interdistrict cooperation (pairing); receipt of aid for interdistrict cooperation; joint agreements to provide secondary education; consolidation; dissolution and attachment; and detachment and annexation.

All the districts that are currently part of the Freshwater-Woodland Cooperative are products of the consolidation of rural or Common Schools in the 1960s. These districts have struggled to avoid further consolidation by pooling resources to provide services on a cooperative basis. In 1967, the Freshwater Cooperative was established to coordinate special education services in the seven districts. In 1973, the Woodland Cooperative was established as a way of offering secondary vocational training and career exploration. In 1981, it merged with the Freshwater Cooperative. In 1983 telecommunications hookups were brought into the Cooperative; since then, the Cooperative has added a part-time curriculum director and an area learning center. Additionally, individual member districts have shared instructional staff and rehabilitation counseling services.

These positive experiences with cooperation and sharing of resources make alternatives other than consolidation attractive to the participating districts. Nonetheless, any loss of individual district identity and administrative autonomy is painful for students and staff in a particular community. Proposals before the districts during 1987-88 include the signing of two formal pairing agreements by four school districts and the creation of the Freshwater Education District (FED). The FED will involve nine school districts, including the seven that are participating in some or all of the educational programs provided through the cooperative structure. The proposed FED will restructure the programs into six general areas: exceptional learners; secondary vocational; community education; developmental programs (including ECFE); learners at risk; and curriculum and instruction.

Community Education in the Participating Districts

Community Education is a silent partner in the funding of ECFE through the levy mechanism. Each district turns its ECFE funds over to the Freshwater-Woodland Cooperative. Two of the seven districts established Community Education programs in order to be able to levy for ECFE.

Philosophy and Goals

The ECFE program has adopted the overall philosophy and goals of the Minnesota State Department of Education. Mary Jo Hofer elaborated further: "ECFE is a parent-child program. However, our focus is really on the parent and how the parent interacts and learns with his or her child. We do a lot with role-modeling. Staff won't tell parents, 'Don't do that.' But if there is a parent in our program who seems to be having difficulty in disciplining his or her child, we'll be sure to cover discipline and various approaches in our parent discussion. A lot happens through modeling; parents watching other parents deal with an issue. Staff won't dictate a particular method. Rather, we try to give options."

Program goals have been tailored to meet the particular needs of pregnant teens and teen parents involved with ECFE. Goals in working with teen parents during 1987-88 were to provide: 1) pertinent information, 2) a support network, and 3) vocational and career assessment information.

History

"We were one of the original projects funded under CQE in 1974," said Mary Jo Hofer. "Eventually Browerville became involved on a limited basis. The grant proposal was written by two principals in Staples. It was called Rural Family Development (RFD), and services were entirely home-based. Twice a month, parents would bring their children to a backyard center. It could be a parent's home or a rural school building. But primarily, a home visitor went into the home once a week for an hour and worked with the young child (three to four years old).

"I was a half-time kindergarten teacher and Dick Hegre, one of the principals, came to me and said, 'You're not busy enough.' I started working part-time on the project, developing curriculum and materials so the home visitors would know what they were supposed to be doing when they went into the home. At one point, we had eight to ten home visitors. They did not have to be licensed but we looked

for people with background in this area and we also offered them a lot of inservice. About a year into the project we started using the Seton Hall materials, especially the activity packets.

"At that time, I saw it more as an extension of the elementary program, but involving parents because we went into the home. Some people wondered why we were sending out educators to work with three-year-old children because it's mothers who need to work with their children. Participation was voluntary, but some of the families were referred by County Social Services.

"In the early 1980s, funding through CQE started to decrease; but we were always given a little bit of money. We obviously couldn't afford all the home visitors we had been using. Gradually, the program just deteriorated to where there were two home visitors. Then it got to the point that we didn't have any home visitors. During the interim year before the levy became effective, we used the state funds to plan for the following year. We still did some special events so the parents knew there was something going on.

"I had resigned from my positions in the district before all this happened and stayed home a year. I then returned to work for the Cooperative on a part-time basis in early childhood special education. When it began to look like there might be money again for the RFD program, I started to get reinvolved with planning it, too. But we didn't take any of my salary from the CQE funds. When we knew there was probably going to be statewide legislation for ECFE, we went to the Cooperative Board [made up of school superintendents and individual district Board members] and said that we thought early childhood special education and ECFE were a good match. There was some disagreement about whether ECFE should stand alone, be offered cooperatively under special education, or be offered cooperatively under vocational education, because it involved working with parents. At the time, the superintendents wanted someone to manage the program administratively. The districts were offering their Community Education programs on an individual basis, so there was no established mechanism to run ECFE cooperatively through CE. Because I was already working in special education on a part-time basis, it ended up there.

"I don't think it was really ever an issue with the Community Education directors, many of whom are school administrators who devote 10 percent of their time to CE. It was a surprise that this kind of thing even passed in the Legislature. Because it was a new program, many of them really didn't know what to do with the funds.

"We decided to shift to center-based parent-child classes. I don't want to say there was a lot of pressure to do this; but the attitude out there was that parents and children wanted to get together. When you send a home visitor out to a home in rural Minnesota, it doesn't allow for interaction with others. Children don't get to see other children and parents don't get to share their issues with other parents. We wanted the program to involve parents learning from each other."

Program Characteristics

Services

ECFE offers 30 parent-child classes a week throughout most of Todd County. The larger communities (Browerville, Staples, and Long Prairie) each offer six to seven classes per week. The remaining four communities each offer one to three classes. Parents pay no fees to attend an ECFE class. According to Mary Jo Hofer, "That's something our superintendents said 'Absolutely no' to. Their attitude was, 'We've levied for it, they've already paid.' This is rural Minnesota and I'm convinced that if we said there is a $10 fee to attend, it wouldn't be an option for many parents. Even if we said fees could be waived, it would inhibit attendance."

The classes are held primarily in the afternoon and evening hours (Monday - Friday) in order to coordinate the use of public school classroom space with early childhood special education. Classes are scheduled by developmental ages of children (toddlers, three-year-olds, four- to five-year-olds). A class for

parents and infants is offered in Staples. Parents enroll in a class with one of their children, but are permitted to participate in more than one class if they have a number of pre-school age children.

The 1 1/2 to two-hour classes begin each fall and meet once a week for 26 weeks. Classes follow a similar format: 1) parents arrive with their children and participate in a circle activity with ECFE staff; 2) parents participate with their children at activity stations (including gross- and fine-motor activities arranged by the ECFE staff); 3) children remain in the activity area with early childhood teacher while parents meet with a parent educator (parent discussion may take place in a corner of the children's activity area or in a separate room depending on the age of the children); and 4) clean-up and a closing group activity.

Staples, Browerville, and Pillager each target one ECFE class to teen parents. Pregnant teens and teen parents are recruited from any of the seven participating school districts and may join a class at any time throughout the year. According to Sue Boehland, the parent educator for these classes, "One advantage to offering the classes after school is that we can side-step any opposition. We have state legislation to encourage teen moms to stay in school, but we do hear folks saying that we shouldn't do too much for them. Everyone is fairly conservative around here, however, some of the communities are more so than others."

Other activities offered through ECFE include special one-time events for parents and children (14 during 1987-88), classes where parents attend without their children (one in 1987-88), outreach at WIC nutrition clinics, and supplementary health screening for 4- to 5-year-old children. Mary Jo Hofer added, "We've found it too difficult to establish individual toy- and book-lending libraries in each of the districts. Also, I just haven't had the time to publish a newsletter as often as I'd like to. We do have a bibliography of books about parenting and early childhood education that are available at the regional library."

Participants

During 1986-87, ECFE served an estimated 36 percent of the eligible population (726 parents and 643 children). In 1987-88 this figure jumped to an estimated 60 percent, due primarily to an increase in participation at special events, the parent-only class, and other activities (outreach at WIC nutrition clinics and health screening). A refinement in reporting requirements to the State Department of Education for 1987-88 yielded the following data: 369 parents and 273 children participated in classes (a series of two or more sessions on a specific topic); 662 parents and 1,124 children participated in a class and/or special event. Of the parents participating in classes, 68 percent (250) were estimated to be low income; 7 percent (25) were single; 4 percent (15) were also teen parents.

"I'd say that most of our families are recruited through friends," said Mary Jo Hofer. "We've had bring-a-friend nights and that works very well. Parents hearing from a friend that the program is pretty good does more for recruitment than any amount of advertising."

The social worker at Todd County Social Services has assisted in recruitment and integration of her clients by offering to go with them the first few times "until they become more comfortable with the group." The public health nurse has offered to do the same thing with teen parents.

Curriculum

The curriculum for children has been adapted from Parents as Teachers (PAT) for classes involving younger children and the Family Oriented Structured Pre-School Activity materials (FOSPA) for four- to five-year-olds (materials adapted from the early childhood family education program in St. Cloud, Minnesota). Teachers have developed their own activities for use in classes targeted to three-year-olds.

Developmentally appropriate activity kits are available for parents to take home and use with their children during the week, and are a valued part of the program.

The interests of the group dictate the discussion topics used with parents. Materials come from a variety of sources including vocational education, the County Extension Service, and parenting magazines.

The classes for pregnant teens and teen parents cover a number of topics felt to be particularly important to this population, including: nutrition, delivery, child development, infant needs/wants, discipline, and career awareness and exploration. Materials and resources come from a variety of sources.

Coordination with Public Schools

ECFE coordinates with the area public schools by sharing space with early childhood special education and by offering after-school classes targeted to teen parents.

"We share facilities in most of our districts, including supplies and equipment," said Mary Jo Hofer. This degree of cooperation is enhanced because Hofer supervises both ECFE and early childhood special education services through the Cooperative. "If we have a handicapped child participating in ECFE, we can provide an extra aide in that class if it is necessary. Parents, of course, can belong to both programs." However, ECFE activities have not been merged or targeted to families with young handicapped children as yet.

"When we first started ECFE classes," said Hofer, "the special education staff were receptive to sharing their rooms, but we had some problems too. It's an issue of territory. Three years into it, things are much better. Staff used to voice concern when supplies were left out. We had one teacher who would tape all her cupboards shut so the equipment and supplies couldn't be used. But staff have gotten over all that. I think ECFE is still the *other* program, but the advantage of extra equipment has helped to establish good working relationships."

The classes for teen parents are funded through ECFE and federal vocational funds (Carl Perkins). Staff are careful to say that other public school funds are not involved. Teen parents can also receive financial assistance for their transportation to ECFE classes, as well as prenatal classes offered at local clinics and hospitals. One strength of the project with teens is that Sue Boehland, the parent educator, also teaches at the high school in Staples. She and the public health nurse encourage the teens to refer their peers who are pregnant. Estimates of the number of teens who become pregnant before graduation are very rough at best, but some school staff estimated that it may be 25 percent of the student population. Boehland says that she finds out who is pregnant from other teens. The students she meets seem to be against abortion and want to keep their children rather than considering adoption. She adds that the "best advocates of planned parenthood are the other teen parents."

Linkage to the Surrounding Community

Todd County Social Services and Public Health use ECFE extensively as a service for their clients. Mary Jo Hofer highlighted the complexity of running an ECFE program on a cooperative basis, particularly when it involves communities that fall in different counties. "I sit on two multiple-county interagency committees -- one in the north and one in the south -- that meet every four to six weeks. We review families on a case-by-case basis to determine which agencies need to be involved and providing services. I can represent the public schools in terms of special education and ECFE services."

A social worker from Todd County Social Services added: "Sometimes I get concerned about the number of different agencies that get involved with a family. Potentially, a number of special education personnel could be going into the home: an occupational therapist, a physical therapist. Then a home

coordinator might be going in three times a week. I think a parent could have difficulty keeping up with that kind of schedule. So we need to be careful not to drain all the energy from the family."

Funding

The total ECFE budget was $146,137 in fiscal year 1987 and grew to $154,075 in fiscal year 1988. Approximately 75 percent of the funds come from state aid; 25 percent is generated by the local levy.

Lessons from this Site

State Mandates

"ECFE is a typical program in Minnesota in that very little comes from the SDE as far as mandates," said Mary Jo Hofer. "The most significant one would be the licensure requirements. They are really going to be a problem for us. I'm not saying the requirements shouldn't be there, but it's going to be difficult for part-time staff working in rural Minnesota to see it as worthwhile to complete the course requirements. I do think it will help with our credibility in the public schools, but the knowledge base and professionalism could have been developed without requiring licensure. It could have been a program requirement.

"I was glad that our planning committee learned immediately that ECFE was not going to be a pre-school program -- that it was ***not*** a program only for children. We were therefore very clear in our focus when we were planning it. It has always been very clear to the superintendents and School Boards that ECFE is not pre-school. Perhaps the influence of rural Minnesota helped because we have always said that if the parents aren't there, the children aren't there. This may have solved any of the problems School Board members may have had that we were going to take children out of their homes so that we can start an education program for them. So when we were first planning it, I could say, 'No, no, no, that's not what we're going to do. It's a parent and child program: no parent, no child.'"

Hiring and Supervision of Staff

"When we started the program under the levy," recalled Hofer, "we were expanding into all these districts. We knew it would be very helpful if, for instance, we could find Long Prairie specialists to staff the Long Prairie classes. They would know the local community and their outreach would be better. We didn't want it to be a Freshwater Cooperative program. We wanted the program to belong to each local community.

"We also looked for people who were licensed in early childhood or people licensed to teach kindergarten or early childhood special education. It was a concern because there aren't that many people in rural Minnesota who have training to work with young children. We did hire several people licensed as elementary teachers. On the parent educator side, it was a little more open because anyone who was interviewed would not have had a problem getting a part-time parent education license through vocational education. For that particular license one could use experienced social workers or home visitors from County Social Services.

"I told the ECFE staff, 'You're going to work as a team -- Early Childhood Specialist - Parent Educator.' It's worked out in 90 percent of the cases. There are some teams that need some work. We have had about four staff meetings a year and two or three different inservice sessions this year. Also, staff can attend any of the inservice opportunities that come up in the state.

"I try to get around to all the sites, but this year I can count on one hand the number of times I've actually gotten out to the classes. It's just very difficult for me to be working eight to five and then to go out to classes in the evenings."

Comparability with Community Education

"I think our people are paid a little more, but not much more than other people working in Community Education," said Mary Jo Hofer. "But ECFE staff are also paid for some preparation time. In terms of job security it is about the same. If enough parents do not sign up for a particular class, it is canceled."

In setting the hourly wage for ECFE staff, a figure had to be found that would be amiable to all the districts. "We had to look at what the larger CE programs in Staples and Long Prairie paid, and we also had to consider what the Community Education people receive in the smaller districts," said Hofer.

Use of Facilities

The use of space is always an issue when a new program is initiated as part of the public schools. When seven rural school districts are involved, the issue becomes more complex. Few, if any, other facilities are available in the community, and the program must deal with each administration separately. Mary Jo Hofer offered an example: "There's one district that really wants to have more daytime classes. I keep listening to the advisory council. But the space just isn't available and there isn't much I can do about it. I can relay the issue to the principal or the superintendent and say it is a real concern. I can ask if we can use the space if any becomes available. If I was only responsible for ECFE, I'd probably be irate. But I know what the space problems are because of my involvement in early childhood special education. If the district pairing arrangements go through for next year, there's a strong possibility some space might open up in the involved school districts. We do rent space in Staples, as part of the Cooperative, but we really like to get the parents accustomed to the school building."

Reaching At-Risk Families

"I deal with the Cooperative Board each October when I go to discuss the levy for the coming year," explained Mary Jo Hofer. "I'm asked how many families we're serving in each community and if we are recruiting the kinds of families who ***really*** need to be there. I ask them to tell me who should be there because I know what they're getting at. Some of the people on the board feel that we must get the families who are referred through County Social Services. We do our darndest, but unless there is a court order requiring them to attend, it can be very difficult to reach them. But I also say to the board, 'I went to the program when my child was young. Do you see me as a parent who needed ECFE? I think I needed to be there.'

"I know we have to do more outreach. Next year I would like some of our staff to spend some time doing home visits to encourage families to use the program. But there are barriers that we face. Some families have a transportation issue. They're just too far out and there is no public transportation. Staples has a taxi service and County Social Services has been creative in arranging transportation. But we just can't afford to do that ourselves."

The social worker from Todd County Social Services confirmed that "Most often, families that I'm working with are not involved with ECFE. So I make either a voluntary referral or if I have a court-ordered plan, I can ask the court to order their involvement. I think it is a good place for these parents to model other parents. So, if they have the skills to role model, I think it is an excellent place to send them. The ECFE staff are extremely sensitive and try to make everything seem okay to the participant. They expose our clients to new ideas, like the activity kits they send home. These may be things the parents don't have in their home or things they've just never thought about using. So parents are exposed to some creative ways of stimulating children without needing a lot of money.

"But I do run into issues. I think a large percentage of the people with whom I work have themselves had a negative experience in school and so they are uncomfortable with anything associated with the public schools. Also, it may be difficult because many of the participants in ECFE are not the people with whom my clients would naturally have friendships. They may feel intimidated. The people who seek out ECFE are probably pretty good parents anyway. They participate to firm up their parenting skills and to see how their children function in that kind of situation. I mean, you find teachers bringing their children, several of the social workers bring their children, the pastors involve their families. They are people who are already mixing socially. I think many of my clients are socially isolated people. They are seen in the community, but they don't have good healthy relationships where they can talk about parenting. So sometimes ECFE is an uncomfortable place for these people to go.

"The intensity of the program is just not enough many times. My clients may go to ECFE on a Tuesday from noon until 1:30 and it's an important place for them to learn, but there's not enough one-to-one time. Their parenting problems are more severe, so I'll end up employing a parent educator to go into the home once a week to spend an hour or two working on very basic things. Or Public Health will send in a home health aide.

"We work with a number of moms who are very limited and who are eligible for special services because they are mentally retarded. ECFE is not geared down to where they are functioning. Also, the group situation at ECFE may be too uncomfortable for them. But sometimes it's the client. They feel uncomfortable with everything. We first have to establish some trust with them and then think about other services."

Advisory Councils in Rural Areas

"The one thing that came out of the planning committee," remembered Hofer, "was an agreement that ECFE have one advisory group. There are so many advisory groups right now. Vocational Education has to have them. Community Education has to have them. It seems like every program that is started now needs to have an advisory council. So the one thing that came from the district administrators was, 'Is there any way we can do this cooperatively so that we each don't have to start an ECFE advisory group?' Each of them has Community Education advisory council, so they didn't want another group.

"The ECFE advisory council has 25 or 26 people on it. At least two parents from each district are involved; so are some of the Community Education directors and the elementary principals. They are not a policy making group; they're advisory to me. I then take their input to the Cooperative Board. They do not get involved in staffing, hiring or review of the ECFE budget."

County Social Services reports they are also involved in the advisory group to "talk about scheduling of activities in different school districts. It's primarily to give input to the Cooperative. We do get concerned because the program stops in the summer; but school stops in the summer, so that's why it happens. The program is very good about trying to accommodate the needs of our clients, but we don't have any control over the format or schedule that is followed."

District 318: Balsam, Big Fork, Effie, Grand Rapids, Squaw Lake, Togo, Warba, Wawina

Community Education & Early Childhood Family Education: "There's an extremely strong relationship. I think it is a very good one. The director of Community Education is the person responsible for the program starting here in the first place and she is very supportive. She sees ECFE enhancing Community Education, not taking anything away from it. We share expenses, facilities, equipment, and a secretary. Sharing these things just made a lot of sense to do.

"ECFE performs a major community service in our outlying areas. Parents not only thank us, but they are so appreciative that we're there. You could probably send staff out there and do anything and you'd make the parents happy. But we don't do just anything; the staff drive out there and they bring all their materials and equipment. I believe it is the highlight of the week for many of the families."

Charlotte Zanardi, ECFE Coordinator

Setting

A beautiful, isolated area of Minnesota, Itasca County is located in the northern part of the state at the mouth of the Mississippi River. The western side of the county includes the Leech Lake Indian Reservation and the Chippewa National Forest. The population of the area is 85 percent white. The remaining 15 percent of the residents are Native American Indians.

District 318 serves slightly more than 4,700 students at 15 buildings located throughout Itasca County. The district covers approximately 2,000 square miles -- almost the size of the state of Delaware -- and is one of the largest in Minnesota. The largest community served by the public schools is Grand Rapids, with a total population of 8,189 (1985 estimate). Grand Rapids is a business, government, and educational center for the area and is therefore home to a high percentage of professional people.

The district also serves a number of communities located a good distance from Grand Rapids: Togo (65 miles northeast of Grand Rapids), Big Fork (45 miles north of Grand Rapids), Squaw Lake (45 miles northwest), Balsam (30 miles north), and Warba (15 miles southeast). Marcie Gobell, the director of Community Education, described many of these schools as "small -- at most 30 students. Yet the Community Education process that has been established in these areas is the focal point of the community. The families in these areas tend to be isolated and must cope with seasonal work in logging. Thus, our population extends from the more sophisticated, well-to-do, to the very poor, needy, rural folks. In Community Education we must be very flexible in order to respond to the variety of human and community needs."

Overall, Itasca County continues to lag behind the state economically. Unemployment is higher (12.2 percent annual average in 1986) and a larger number of families are involved with County Social Services, particularly welfare. The county also has one of the highest divorce rates in the state.

District 318 has experienced three years of deficit spending, and has taken the difficult step to cut $1.5 million from a total operating budget of approximately $19 million in order to present a balanced budget for 1988-89. The School Board found itself in the situation of deciding to levy for ECFE in 1986 just as they were beginning to face larger, district-wide financial problems that would require the cutting of other programs and reductions in staff. "I've had people criticize ECFE because we've been growing through all this," said Marcie Gobell. "Our district has always been very lean in terms of staff and administration; poor and proud of it."

Community Education in District 318

"The school district levied for Community Education beginning in 1974," said Marcie Gobell. The program, however, did not fulfill the intent of the law (e.g., did not have an active and representative Community Education Advisory Council, did not have a Community Education director, and had not levied sufficient amount of monies for a successful all around program). The School Board and the community did not fully understand the Community Education process.

The School Board and the superintendent asked the Northern Minnesota Citizens' League to undertake a study to determine the future of the district's Community Education program in terms of funding, coordination and planning. The study suggestions resulted in the hiring of a Community Education director in 1982 who was charged with planning, funding operations and community coordination, in fulfillment of the fullest intent of the State's plan for the Community Education process.

"We started right off with a bang because we were ready, and the community was ready," remembered Marcie Gobell. "One of our first challenges was the outlying communities. We worked very hard to convince them that Community Education revolved around their school and their community. We are only able to address this issue when we are able to empower a local person to be our outreach coordinator.

"We only go on what people want -- *their* ideas. People come to us with ideas for a class. If somebody wants to teach something we say, 'sure.' If no one signs up, we don't do it. So I think we have become a vehicle for people who want to share their skills.

"We are very careful not to duplicate services. Very often we do co-sponsor things. I think we have become a valuable partner because Grand Rapids is a busy community. There are an exceptional number of agencies and groups here. I think people see Community Education as a great vehicle for communication within the community because we are not political. Almost anything will fit within the CE process. Our basic philosophy is that if there is a need, show us and we'll do it."

The mission statement of Community Education in District 318 reads:

> To promote human enrichment through a relevant Community Education program addressing life long learning and community support for schools to create better communities.

Community Education classes are offered in Grand Rapids as well as the outlying areas. The estimated budget during 1987-88 (excluding ECFE) was $158,000 and is expected to slightly increase next year.

The CE advisory council is very actively involved in program development and has endorsed the following work plan for 1988-89 (not in prioritized order):

1. To promote and support Adult Literacy, Adult Basic Education Consortium, Literacy Council.
2. To promote and support Talk-Net (community-school speaker bureau).
3. To promote and support interagency cooperation and coordination.
4. To promote and support child development, parenting, Early Childhood Family Education, Latch Key.
5. To promote and support Youth Development Plan.
6. To promote and support the use of Interactive T.V. for Community Education.
7. To promote and support senior citizen involvement.
8. To promote and support school/business partnerships.
9. To promote and support Community Education enrichment classes and seminars including community outreach.

A unique feature of Community Education in District 318 is its active involvement in a Community Services Council serving Itasca, Cass, and Aitkin Counties. Thus, all major social agencies and organizations in these counties cooperate to publish a master schedule of activities three times a year.

History

District 318 has been one of the last districts to levy for an ECFE program in Minnesota. According to Marcie Gobell, "The feeling was that it wasn't needed here. We had early childhood special education (ECSE) and people said, 'oh, we already have it.' We had to work very hard to show people that ECFE would serve a different population in addition to parents of special needs children. I had to work hard to convince people of the importance of the parenting component. We had to get information from all over the state because this is a town with a show-me attitude. A task force was established to study ECFE statewide and make recommendations regarding our district establishing the program.

"We really had to establish the need. You can talk until you are blue in the face, and I *did*; but until the community becomes excited, and the community asks why or why not, it wasn't going to happen. Finally, people kept asking, 'Why doesn't Grand Rapids have ECFE?' I just said, 'Keep talking, keep talking.' In October 1986, the School Board passed a resolution by a unanimous vote to levy for ECFE."

"When we moved back to Minnesota three years ago," remembered Charlotte Zanardi, the ECFE coordinator, "I really felt that because we were coming to northern Minnesota, there wasn't going to be any employment opportunities for me in the early childhood area. I really had no desire to go back to working for minimum wages in a day-care center; I just felt that somehow, I had gotten past all that. In my most recent position, I had been with a company for seven years and supervised a chain of child-care centers over a two-state area.

"While I was in the process of doing all the packing, my husband was already living up here. He would send me anything from the paper that looked interesting, but actually there was very little. Anyway, one little ad came in the mail saying that another district, Deer River, was looking for an ECFE coordinator. I had no idea what early childhood family education was at that time. So I responded and when I moved up here, I started trying to find out. I talked to a home economics teacher in Grand Rapids who said that Grand Rapids didn't offer it. So I didn't get much information before the interview and part of the application process included turning in a press release for ECFE. I know how to do this type of thing, so I took a stab in the dark and came pretty close -- I interviewed and got the job. I asked a lot of questions in the interview and tried to assimilate it all. Shortly after that, I was interviewed in another small town near here and I was hired there too. Since the positions were part-time, I started both of them at the same time.

"Really, I didn't come to ECFE with a special interest in family support and education. My background was more in early childhood education. But I've ended up having strong feelings about it. I just became very interested and loved it. Now I can't imagine doing anything else." In the summer of 1987, the director of Community Education hired Charlotte Zanardi full-time on a 10-month contract to initiate the ECFE program in District 318.

Philosophy and Goals

District 318 has adopted the ECFE goals as stated by the State Department of Education. According to Charlotte Zanardi, "I made a complete flip-flop of my thinking within a period of a few months of having to go back to school to get my license and taking this job. I came in with some very strong feelings regarding the philosophy of programming for children and parents; that doesn't mean that I walked around and told it to everybody.

"When I started in early childhood back in the late 1960s and early 1970s, it was very structured, very teacher-directed, and very product-oriented rather than process. As I started back in school, I began questioning these things. All this was happening at the same time that I was getting involved with ECFE, so I was practicing what I was coming to believe.

"When I started interviewing for ECFE staff in Grand Rapids, many of my questions were geared to what I felt was good for kids; whether it is from a parent's perspective or a teacher's perspective. So I either hired people who also believed that children learn and develop from being able to experience things, or people who I felt would be very flexible and open to developmentally appropriate practices.

"I don't think that I can make people believe as I do, but I let them know the things that are acceptable and those things that are not. I think that each of the staff has her individual philosophy, and I've been influenced by them too. But I think it has all worked out because we all basically feel the same way and we've been able to get it across to parents. I'd say that we are very low-keyed and non-structural. There's an overall structure in setting up the particular activities, but they are all very non-teacher directed. We do very few cognitive kinds of things. It's all done very informally. On parent evaluations we hear, 'It's so nice that there isn't the expectation that you do everything and that things have to be on schedule.' I think that is important because so much of children's lives are directed by adults. We see ECFE as a chance for parents to have fun with their kids and for us to model appropriate kinds of interactions."

Program Characteristics

Services

"I chose to organize our classes into three quarters because it worked out well in terms of advertising with Community Education," said Charlotte Zanardi. "As far as the number of weeks that classes meet and the special classes, it has been experimental."

The first ECFE classes for parents and children began in October, 1987. By early spring of 1988, a total of 16 five- to seven-week, classes and six special events were available to families. Most classes are scheduled during the morning and early afternoon hours. In Grand Rapids, classes are scheduled both across ages of children and for particular age groups. Classes in Grand Rapids are all held at the ECFE Center located in space rented from the local YMCA. One or two classes across ages of children are also held each week in the Warba, Big Fork, and Squaw Lake kindergarten classrooms. Fees for classes range from $5 to $12 per family, depending upon the number of sessions, and may be waived easily. A weekly parent-child class targeted to teen parents and their toddlers is available at the ECFE Center in Grand Rapids. This class carries no fee.

Classes run 1 1/2 to two hours and tend to follow the same format: 1) a parent and child interaction time that gives families the chance to explore planned activities that are appropriate to the ages of the children; 2) parents separate for a discussion group led by a parent educator that is tailored to meet the interests of the group, while children continue in guided activities with an early childhood teacher; and 3) parents, children, and teachers join for closing songs, games, and movement activities.

Special events are scheduled at the ECFE Center in Grand Rapids, at the Balsam church, and the Wawina town hall. Activities during the spring quarter included puppet making, special fathers and kids nights, Music and Movement, and a Discovery Toys open house.

ECFE staff also publish a parent newsletter; offer activities at WIC nutrition clinics in Grand Rapids, Squaw Lake, and Big Fork; and co-sponsor family events with the YMCA in Grand Rapids. A small lending library of books for parents is also available.

Participants

During 1987-88, an estimated 15 percent of the eligible population participated in an ECFE class or special event. Of these, approximately eight percent were single parents and five percent were teen parents.

"We grew very fast," said Charlotte Zanardi. "We took off really much faster than I thought we would. I thought that we had over-scheduled and then all of a sudden all the classes were running. I had the problem that I had scheduled staff for classes for which I really didn't have the budget. So, in the first quarter (fall), everything we scheduled was held. In the second quarter (winter) we cancelled only one class and combined two classes; and these were new classes that we hadn't offered at the very beginning. We actually ended up turning people away during the winter. During the spring quarter I added classes but we ended up canceling some; none of our core classes, however. I think the program will continue to grow because parents tend to recruit for us when they talk to their friends and neighbors about us. We have found that word-of-mouth is the way most of our parents find out about us.

"I think we still struggle to attract the parents who may need ECFE the most. We have a lot of unemployment in the area and I know many of our families are dealing with stress because of it. We started out with a number of teen parents earlier this year, but we're down to one. I think it is because a lot of the teens have either moved away or dropped out of school. We hope to work more closely with the teen parent program in Grand Rapids next year.

"The issue for us is getting parents motivated to come. One of the possibilities that I've talked with Social Services about is taking classes out to parents. Right now, we use the kindergarten rooms in the outlying areas, which may or may not be threatening to someone who has had a bad school experience. But it is difficult to find other space in very rural areas. In Grand Rapids there is an apartment complex where a number of families live who are on public assistance. I think that we could start a drop-in activity there, but we just can't do everything at once; we have to take it a step at a time."

Curriculum

"I think that we do the same things as a lot of the programs in Minnesota," said Charlotte Zanardi. "We draw our curriculum from many sources. We don't have parent educators or early childhood teachers all doing the same thing. We use a lot of the vocational materials from the state curriculum center. I do require staff to turn in lesson plans at the end of the quarter, but I don't monitor them. I'm in and out of the classes so I know what is going on."

One unique feature of the ECFE program in District 318 is the careful integration of materials and activities that offer a multicultural perspective. Joan Bibeau-Henderson, a parent educator in the program, has developed curriculum that is sensitive to all cultures, including Native American Indians. Individual class descriptions do not mention these materials or approaches. Instead, the materials are placed around the room the children use, carefully integrated as an activity that children and their parents may choose.

Coordination with the Public Schools

The primary contact between ECFE and the public schools has involved the provision of parent-child classes to teen parents in a late-afternoon class held at the YMCA in Grand Rapids. Teen parents have the option of attending the high school or an alternative learning center while child care is provided for their young children.

The ECFE program also employs a kindergarten teacher as a part-time staff person. According to Charlotte Zanardi, "We may have had some influence on her, but I think she already believed in the philosophy of ECFE. Kindergarten teachers have a lot of pressure on them to do certain things, so I would hope that somehow we would start to have some kind of influence with them. But I think that's going to take a lot of time."

Linkage to Surrounding Community

"I feel like this year has primarily involved getting started," said Charlotte Zanardi. "I've made the amount of contacts that I felt that I could do comfortably. Little by little people are getting to know our role. I was contacted by someone from Head Start asking us to get involved in doing workshops for parents of pre-schoolers. The county social workers invited me to come and speak with them. I now participate on an interagency committee with Head Start, Public Health, Social Services and Special Education. Right now, we aren't doing any parent education for them; they do their own.

"We send staff over to three WIC nutrition clinics a couple times a month. In the last couple weeks we've tapered off because we were running low on money. Usually one staff person goes and sets up toys and activities for the children. Parents have gotten so they talk to the staff. It's done very informally. We put them on our mailing list if they are not receiving our newsletter. Sometimes we have parents who register for a class, but that's not the purpose. It's just a chance for parents to have some contact with some other people. Joan goes to the clinics in Big Fork and Squaw Lake and she also offers the classes at Squaw Lake. It's been nice because she has been able to talk to those parents on a different level than can be done in a group.

"I really don't feel any competition with other agencies in the community. When Head Start began in Big Fork, I mentioned which day we offered ECFE, not to pressure them to do their program another day or anything. But the program was set up to start at noon and our last session ends at 12:15, so we have families who can go to both. Our enrollment has maintained in Big Fork, so I think people are attending both rather than picking one over the other."

Funding

Total funding for ECFE in 1987-88 was $140,000. Approximately $20,000 came from state aid; $118,000 from the local levy; with less than one percent coming from fees. "I've seen differences in the way school districts use the ECFE funds," said Charlotte Zanardi. "In another district, the program was under the elementary principal and I just took all our consumable supplies from the central supplies. Here in Grand Rapids, we purchase all our own supplies. I don't even use a pencil that hasn't been purchased with ECFE funds. Because funding is so tight in the district, we just have to be able to pay for everything we use. We pay for the office space we share with Community Education. We cover 10 percent of the Community Education director's salary and half of the secretary's salary. We are charged $877 for the payroll supervisor's time.

"Just a month ago our new superintendent told the Community Education director that I was paying ECFE staff for too much preparation time and that I should conform to what the district does as a whole. I think one hour for every five hours of teaching is unreasonable for ECFE, but there isn't anything that I can do about it. I am still able to pay staff set-up and packing time, as well as travel time to the outlying areas. It's not that the district is saving any money, since the ECFE levy is dedicated funding. People are watching how any district money is spent."

Developing A New Program

ECFE coordinators frequently relied on program development information disseminated by the State Department of Education and informal sharing of information between coordinators as they developed their ECFE program. "I worked in Deer River as a coordinator before coming to Grand Rapids," said Charlotte Zanardi. "In Deer River, the Community Education director gave me the state guide for developing a program. So during the summer I read it and started writing my ideas in a notebook. I just learned a lot by trying things and talking to other people. I also completed the one-credit Introduction to ECFE course.

"The regional networks of ECFE coordinators that were established by the state ECFE specialist have been very helpful. The meetings are held twice a year. We've covered topics such as needs assessments, community development, advisory councils, outreach techniques, staffing and licensure, facility standards, program components and scheduling, budgeting, data collection, and the aims and assumptions of parent education.

"Originally, before I came to Grand Rapids, I had a tendency to network with other people who were also working in programs that are pretty small. I think many of us felt, although it was unspoken, that we didn't have a lot in common with the larger programs. Smaller programs might have a staff of two and offer two or four classes a week. Grand Rapids is a large program for the area. So now I find that the people I ask questions of are those working in programs similar to the size of Grand Rapids.

"I think that both Community Education and ECFE are kind of unique because districts don't compete with one another. There is no such thing as someone stealing someone else's idea. People take it as a compliment if you use their promotional materials, if you use a form they've developed, or if you use their idea for a class or activity. One of the women who I've worked with in a district south of here said, 'You know, I've never written up job descriptions.' So I said, 'I'll send you copies of mine.' I think there has been a lot of sharing like that around the state. When someone finds out that someone else is starting a program, people are extremely helpful, especially if the coordinator is new. That is why I think the programs look alike around the state, everyone is using the same stuff if it is good.

"When I came to Grand Rapids to develop the program, I went through every single thing that I had from other programs in the state. The director of Community Education also gave me the things she had collected. I had stacks and stacks of things from other programs. I summarized what the programs were doing and came up with four different scheduling plans for Grand Rapids. I then reviewed the plans with the advisory council. We picked them apart and came up with the plan that we use now."

Staffing for ECFE

"Our instructors in ECFE must be certified," said Charlotte Zanardi. "This is quite different from other Community Education instructors who might teach a class, so they're handled in a different way. In the master agreement that the school district has with teachers, there is a section that talks about ECFE teachers. Their rate of pay is currently $13.78 an hour. It's a different rate of pay than if they were on teacher contract. They aren't on the steps or the lanes. It doesn't make any difference what their credentials are, they're all paid the same rate of pay. The Community Education instructors who are licensed, certified teachers in the school district must also be paid that rate of pay. Otherwise, in Grand Rapids, the Community Education instructors are paid an 80/20. They receive 80 percent of the money that's taken in for a class, but not to exceed a certain amount an hour.

"The disadvantage is that ECFE people have to be kept at very few hours per week, somewhere around fourteen hours. If we want people to work more hours than that, then we have to go through the

regular process of posting the position. Right now our school district has cut many, many teachers and there's a lot of teachers out on unrequested leave. It is good that we ended up hiring the people hourly and not asking that they be put on a regular teacher contract because if we had, they would probably have been bumped this year.

"Also, when a program is new, it's impossible to know which classes will go and which ones will be canceled due to lack of enrollment. Once you're committed to paying someone 3/5 time, you need to provide work for them. It's hard to know if you'll have enough work for them right away. Once the new licensure requirements go into effect next year, I think it would then be good to get the staff on regular teacher contracts; they're teachers just like everybody else in the district. But right now I don't think they are always viewed that way. I believe you have to be willing to pay for what you want in terms of staff. I also think there's a degree of professionalism that comes with having regular positions in the district with benefits. But we need a separate seniority list so there won't be problems with bumping."

Time to Plan and Train Staff

"I started working in Grand Rapids long before the program started," recalled Charlotte Zanardi. "I had three or four months to plan even before the rest of the staff were hired. So I had time to think about what they would need the most. Also, I had started as a part-time instructor of the one-credit Introduction to ECFE course at a university located in northern Minnesota. Another ECFE staff person from Grand Rapids teaches it with me. So when other staff were hired, they agreed to complete the course. I was able to pay them for about eight hours of staff time to take the course. It gave them a chance to get to know me and each other. In the course we did a lot of small-group work and a lot of comparisons of different programs."

Unanticipated Staffing Issues

Currently, as ECFE staff positions become more full-time and part of the teacher bargaining unit, they become subject to the local labor issues being faced in the district. Charlotte Zanardi has been notified recently that she has been bumped by a fifth grade teacher whose position was cut for the coming school year. Because this teacher has more seniority in the district, and the ECFE coordinator position is part of the bargaining unit for teachers, and because the new ECFE licensure requirements do not go into effect until next year, Charlotte Zanardi has to find another job.

"The decision that my position was, in fact, part of the teacher bargaining unit didn't come down until less than two months ago," said Charlotte Zanardi. "The district administration requested that the Bureau of Mediation determine where my position be placed. The Bureau determined that it would be part of the bargaining unit for teachers. Actually, the ECFE coordinator position falls somewhere in between. But, when the Bureau looked at the Minnesota statute that defines a supervisor, they said no, the position doesn't meet the test. Although I make all the decisions concerning the program and I supervise the staff, ultimately it falls to the director of Community Education. She has the ultimate authority to hire, fire, and reprimand staff. A year ago when we started the program, this issue was the furthest one from my mind. That's why I think we need to be very careful how ECFE staff relate to the school district. It's a complex situation."

Facilities

"I think one of the major issues faced in running an ECFE program has to do with facilities," said Charlotte Zanardi. "I think that is probably true regardless of the size or where the program is in the state. Even if a program doesn't experience a lot of difficulties finding space, you still must work around other staff. If a kindergarten room is used, ECFE staff have to be careful not to impose on somebody else.

You have to work around existing schedules. In the outlying areas of Grand Rapids, I had to find out if we could use the kindergarten room and when the room was available. Staff in each of the buildings didn't know me and didn't know much about the program.

"I looked for space all over Grand Rapids. It was hard to find something that met our needs that was affordable. We ended up paying $240 a month for space at the YMCA. In some of the outlying areas we are located in the kindergarten rooms. We can store our materials there in boxes between classes. In other settings, we completely pack up and take our materials with us so that we don't leave anything in the room between classes."

Profiles of Twelve Sites Across the U.S.

Selecting twelve sites from around the United States posed a different problem from selecting the nine within Minnesota. In Minnesota, we knew the dimensions of the field: we had access to a list of all ECFE sites. Outside Minnesota, however, we did not know how many programs existed of the type we were seeking, or where they were located.

In December of 1987, we sent a letter requesting program nominations to each person on a list of state-level experts provided by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. The response to this letter was not as large as we had hoped. We hypothesized several possible explanations: the letter landed on the desks of busy individuals just before the Christmas holiday; the wording of the letter might have been unclear, either about the type of the program we were seeking or the degree of involvement we would require; or, finally, that the limited response reflected an actual dearth of existing family support and education programs in Community Education. To test the first two hypotheses, we sent out a second, explanatory letter in February. Through the courtesy of the staff of Community Education Today, we also placed a notice requesting program nominations in the February issue. A similar notice appeared in the newsletters of many state Community Education Associations. (Appendix F contains a list of nominated programs, their services and participants.)

As responses began to come in, we started the selection process. The first step was to determine whether a program fell within the scope of our study. To be comparable to the Minnesota sites, the programs had to come under the auspices of Community Education. Unfortunately, that eliminated some strong programs offered through technical colleges, or through Adult Education in states where the Adult Education mandate was clearly separate from the Community Education mandate. The programs had to serve parents of children between the ages of zero and six, although they did not necessarily have to cover that whole range. (One of the programs selected turned out primarily to serve parents of school-age children, which was not our original understanding. In fairness to the program's staff, who had already put time and effort into the questionnaires and interviews, we decided to keep the program in the study.)

Once we determined which sites were eligible, we looked for well developed programs that would give us the opportunity to explore the range of implementation issues involved in housing family support and education programs in Community Education. We were looking for programs that had a consistent history of offering family support and education. Given that the pooling of community resources is one of the tenets of Community Education, we also looked for programs that worked jointly with other agencies or organizations, particularly to serve families identified as "at-risk."

We decided to choose no more than one program from any one state. Part of our interest was in the variety of ways Community Education operated, and we decided that we would learn more by choosing programs with twelve different administrative and funding structures. This forced us to make some difficult decisions, because we found that in Community Education, if it rains, it pours: states with one strong program were likely to have several other programs that were equally strong. Time constraints forced us to begin to choose programs before all the nominations were in. Occasionally, we had to pass over a strong late arrival because it was too similar to a program we had already selected.

We also wanted to parallel the demographic distribution of the Minnesota study by dividing the twelve sites into equal numbers of urban, suburban, and rural sites. Urban and suburban sites were plentiful; rural sites proved hard to find. Indeed, two of the sites we consider rural for the purpose of the study are not rural in the classic sense: in one, the Community Education director calls her area "rurban"; in another, the Community Education director called the area a "metropolitan community in a rural setting."

We had difficulty covering the country as we would have liked. Nominations simply did not come in from a broad strip of the country west of Texas and Wisconsin and east of California. When we first noticed this pattern, we decided to investigate. We followed up with our state-level contacts and called many local Community Education programs. While we found fledgling family support and education programs, and programs offered under the auspices of other parts of the education system, we were unable to locate any well developed family support and education programs under the auspices of Community Education in this region.

Once we had selected a program, we called our contact at that site to explain the scope of the study and what participation would require. If the contact person agreed to participate, we sent out two questionnaires, one to the Community Education director or coordinator, and one to the person in charge of the family support and education program or services. The questionnaires covered the history of the program, characteristics of the school district and community, program philosophy and goals, administrative structure, services, staff, facilities, advisory groups, outreach and linkage, evaluation, funding, and curriculum. We also asked them to send us the same set of documents we had requested from the programs in Minnesota.

Once we received the completed questionnaires and documentation, we conducted interviews by telephone with the Community Education director or coordinator, and the coordinator of the family support and education program or services. Each interview lasted one to two hours, and probed the topic areas in the questionnaire in depth. In addition, we asked each Community Education director or coordinator to give us the name of a state-level specialist in Community Education. We conducted brief interviews with these contacts on the background and current status of Community Education in that state.

After we completed the interviews, we wrote profiles of each of the twelve sites, which we returned to the Community Education director or coordinator and to the coordinator of the family support and education program or services at each site to check for accuracy. At that time, we also asked the directors and coordinators to complete a 3-page questionnaire to assess whether the benefits to housing family support and education programs in Community Education that had surfaced in Minnesota could generalize to programs in other states.

The profiles follow a standard format:

* Community Education in the State
* Program Setting
* Program Goals
* Program History
* Program Characteristics
  - Services
  - Participants
  - Curriculum
  - Coordination with Public School Programs
  - Linkage to Surrounding Community
* Funding Sources
* Lessons from this Site

Charts summarizing funding levels and sources; staffing; types of service; participation; use of facilities; and evaluation are included in Appendix E.

Many of the programs continue to grow and change. The profiles reflect our interpretation of information provided between April and August of 1988 by the director or coordinator of Community Education and the director or coordinator of the family support and education program or services at each site. We appreciate their time, effort and candor.

Guntersville, Alabama

Community Education & Family Support and Education: "They go hand in hand. Everything in Community Education is to improve the quality of life for families. If we reduce the number of dropouts, we'll improve the life of the families and the community."

Jeannie Wallace, Community Education Coordinator

Community Education in Alabama

Community Education began in Alabama in 1971 with a grant from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation to the University of Alabama at Birmingham to establish a Regional Center for Community Education. In 1975, the State Board of Education adopted a resolution in support of Community Education, and the Alabama Community Education Association was born. In 1977, a line item for Community Education was incorporated in the State Education budget. In 1978, the Community Education Section was added to the State Department of Education. In 1975-76, 8 out of 128 school systems had Community Education. By 1986-87, that number had grown to 45.

To have a Community Education program, a local education agency must apply for a state grant and match state funding with local monies, usually with a line item in the school district's budget. Alabama's predominantly rural counties have a poor local tax base, so some funding for Community Education must come from the state level if a program is to survive. In 1984, Alabama ranked among the top ten in the nation in state aid to education -- 68% of the educational dollar came from the state, compared to a national average of 50% -- and was one of the five lowest in local support for education -- 19%, versus 42% nationally.

Although state funding for Community Education has grown from $100,000 in FY 1979 to $576,828 in 1986-87 (with an additional $5,153,130 coming from local funds and $720,851 from other sources), state funding is not stable. 1987 saw a battle to maintain level funding that mobilized the Alabama Community Education Association to become active lobbyists.

The rationale for Community Education in the 1984 Alabama Community Education State Plan states that Community Education "fosters positive feelings towards supporting education." In Alabama, the mission of Community Education is closely allied with the K-12 system. The State Plan mandates that a "public elementary or secondary school shall be involved directly and substantially in administering and operating the program." Grant proposals from local programs must describe the impact of their program on K-12. Community Education also shares the State Superintendent's emphasis on parent involvement, as set forth in A Plan for Excellence: Alabama's Public Schools. The five-year State Plan lists 16 areas that state-funded Community Education programs should cover, "with a special emphasis on strengthening K-12," including: pre-kindergarten programs for parents and children; parent education programs; and parent involvement programs.

In 1981, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation provided a three-year grant to the Community Education Section for the Parents and Learning Project, which established six model parent-involvement sites and developed a Parenting Resource Guide. In 1986-87, of 45 Community Education systems, 29 provided some form of parent involvement.

Program Setting

Guntersville, Alabama, on the Tennessee River and Lake Guntersville, has a population of 7,500 who derive their income mainly from small industries and tourism. The largest employer in the area is the Lee plant -- the blue-jeans manufacturer -- with about 600 employees. Jeannie Wallace, Community Education Coordinator, added that "we're the county seat, which means you have a lot of people in the low economic level, because more services are available here." Of the 2,005 students enrolled in the K-12 program, approximately 38% qualify for free or reduced-price lunches. Wallace, who had taught in Alabama, New York, and Georgia before taking on her present post, commented that she'd "never lived in any place that had such a strict division between the haves and the have-nots. There are very few ordinary middle-class people. My offerings go across the economic lines, but what's nice is that with some Community Education programs, like cultural enhancement, we get a lot of support from the haves, and then the programs are available to everybody. Support from the 'haves' in the way of participation is vital to the continuation of Community Education in Guntersville."

Program Goals

The primary goal of the Parent Involvement Program is to enhance academic achievement for participating students and reduce the number of school dropouts by helping low-income parents a) feel comfortable in the school and with teachers; b) learn how to help their children learn; and c) better understand the importance of education.

Program History

The Parent Involvement Program was the brainchild of Dr. Brandon Sparkman, Superintendent of Guntersville City Schools. In 1966, Dr. Sparkman had created a similar program in another Alabama district. "I had set out," he said, "to have one of the outstanding programs in the country. We went to the Bank Street project, and Detroit, and a program in Jones County, Georgia, and took the best of everything we found, but we added more structure. That seemed to be the primary need of parents. The research on Head Start in 1967-68 showed no significant difference after first grade, but we had a difference after third grade. I left after that, but I suspect there was a difference all the way through.

"When I came to Guntersville, they had a summer Head Start program. I talked to the Community Action Committee and asked them to give us two teachers and two aides to do a full-year program. This was the fall of 1981, before we had public-school kindergarten."

In 1984, when Jeannie Wallace became the coordinator of the new Community Education program, "The Parent Involvement Program was the very first thing Dr. Sparkman asked for . . . but I didn't feel qualified because of the magnitude of the task, so I waited until I felt I'd established a community base of support. I wanted them to see that Community Education was a quality program, not a flash in the pan." In 1986, Community Education offered the Parent Involvement Program for parents of the five-year-olds in Head Start. The program consisted of one session every other week for parents, one in the morning and one in the evening. Between thirty to forty per cent of the parents attended.

Once the kindergarten was fully funded, the Guntersville Schools started a Head Start program for four-year-olds and required parent participation in the Parent Involvement Program.

Program Characteristics

Services

The Parent Involvement Program holds parent meetings for two hours every other week. The program provides transportation, babysitting/tutoring, and refreshments. The meetings include: informal visiting among parents; a guest speaker on topics ranging from nutrition, to self-esteem in children, child

development, community services, and the development of pre-reading skills; a videotape viewing and discussion, in which parents see their children working with a Head Start teacher on a specific concept; and a make-it/take-it period, in which parents make and discuss a game or toy that reinforces the concept or skill demonstrated on the videotape.

The Community Education Coordinator and her assistant, who make up the staff of the program, make weekly home visits to encourage attendance, build confidence in school personnel, and offer information and support.

Dr. Sparkman explained how the program has grown: "I met with the parents at the end of last year -- I meet with them a couple of times a term -- and said, 'Tell me what we did poorly, and what we did well.' They said, 'We want you to tell us earlier in the year what the expectations are for first grade, so we can have more time to prepare.' They also wanted us to continue to meet with them this year [when their children entered first grade] and I said, 'We don't have the personnel,' but they insisted, so we said, 'Okay, we'll meet with you once every six weeks.'"

Participants

In 1987-88, 36 families participated in the Parent Involvement Program, all of whom had qualified for Head Start on economic grounds. Parent attendance is mandatory for the children to remain in the Head Start program. Dr. Sparkman emphasized that "We have even expelled three four-year-olds from the program because their parents didn't attend. But we have to be hard-nosed about it because if you make exceptions for some, others won't come. But I do it because I believe in it. I have seen people's lives change."

The Community Education Coordinator uses several strategies to attract parents to the program. "Here in the South," she said, "we still have the old black/white issue." When Wallace, who is white, goes into the black community, "I take along a black parent who's sold on the program to visit with me, and they talk for the program." She also asks the black minister, who is influential in the community, to speak about the program. She makes a similar request of the ministers in Guntersville's three poor white communities.

Curriculum

The program follows the model Dr. Sparkman developed in 1966 after extensive research. He and Jeannie Wallace, Community Education Coordinator, developed the curriculum "with the idea of having the children learn things that would make them successful for kindergarten." Ms. Wallace meets with the grade representative from the kindergarten, the principal of the elementary school, and the two Head Start teachers to set up the children's course of study.

Dr. Sparkman outlined his philosophy of the children's program: "In my experience, children of lower socio-economic backgrounds have other children to play with and know about getting along. What they don't have is structure and mental stimulation. So we provide what I think of as 'structured flexibility.' We work with them to assess reading readiness. I have worked out a means to measure visual and auditory perception skills, and the teachers build on those skills. If you don't assess the children, you can do things that are harmful for some or a waste of time for others."

When planning classes for the parents, said Wallace, "I read everything I could get my hands on. The state coordinator of Community Education supplied me with materials on parent programs, both from Alabama and from other states, including the Parenting Resource Guide." Wallace also went to her advisory group, who suggested the program address life skills as well as parenting, by adding "money management for the average person -- if you're making 3.35 an hour, how to manage it wisely. They also suggested we have someone talk about the new tax law, about hygiene, and about nutrition."

Coordination with Public School Programs

The two-day Head Start orientation familiarizes parents and children with school facilities and routine. The Community Education Coordinator also invites the kindergarten teachers to parent meetings to talk about discipline, organizational skills, growth and development, and pre-reading skills.

Linkage to the Surrounding Community

Community Education in Alabama has a strong Adopt-A-School program. In Guntersville, the Community Education Coordinator has secured the active involvement of twelve local businesses. The Adopt-A-School program has given door prizes, awards, and recognition certificates for the parents; provided free meals for the four-year-olds; and has enabled the four-year-olds and their siblings to go to extended-day classes one day a week for free.

Funding Sources

Head Start funds the children's program: teacher aides; classroom materials; medical and dental care. The Community Education Coordinator, who administers the Parent Involvement program and conducts home visits, is paid by Community Education. The Board of Education funds a half-time staff person, refreshments, and transportation to the meetings. The Board's general fund also paid for the videotape equipment, which creates what Jeannie Wallace calls the "heart" of the program: parents watching their children learn.

Lessons from this Site

Expanding from an Existing Base

Looking back on the origins of the Parent Involvement Program, Dr. Sparkman remembered that he "had been wanting to get back into parent education. I wanted to provide services as soon as parents found out they were going to have a child, because I believe that if you want to change children's future, you have to change parents. But we had to start somewhere, so we went with the Head Start program for five-year-olds." In a state with a tradition of low spending on the local level, Dr. Sparkman had a vision of the kind of program he'd like to see, but took the realistic course of 'piggybacking' his program on Head Start, an existing program with stable outside funding.

Strong Support from the Top

The initial impetus for this program came from the Superintendent's office, which obviated the kind of problems that can plague a program without official support. For example, "We have no difficulty finding space," said Jeannie Wallace. "Dr. Sparkman laid the groundwork for us."

The Parent Involvement Program is also consistent with the state-wide mission of Community Education. Community Education in Alabama encourages programs that strengthen the schools. In addition, Guntersville "is an area that prides itself on quality, and will support anything that will enhance the quality of the schools." In such a climate it is easy to muster support for a program that is tied directly to school readiness and home-school partnerships.

A Need for Basic Services

Although the Parent Involvement Program's primary emphasis is education, Wallace regularly addresses the families' basic needs both inside and outside the classroom, seeing that as a necessary prerequisite to the educational part of the program. "These are people who constantly need assistance. These are people who may become unemployed, or sick and have difficulty getting medication. I will work with families to get them clothing or shelter because I believe we can't teach them to teach their children unless they have clothes and a place to live."

Nevertheless, the program cannot meet all the needs of parents, and therefore cannot reach all the parents Wallace and Sparkman would like to see involved. Transportation is part of the problem. Families can live as far as ten miles from the school, and the program has no transportation for the children. "The school bus," Wallace explained, "carries high-school students, and a four-year-old in the fall is just a baby. We decided they were just too young to ride the bus, they just wouldn't be safe." This limits participation to parents who have transportation to bring their children to school. Both Sparkman and Wallace felt that the Parent Involvement Program was therefore reaching only the "highest part of the low economic level."

The Need for Personal Linkages

In a small town, linkage in the human-service community takes place on a personal level. The head of the Department of Human Resources sits on the Community Education Advisory Board and makes a presentation to the parents about community services that are available to them. "If they're having trouble with food stamps, or ADC," said Wallace, "he's there to help." Similarly, Wallace sits on the board of Target Success, a job-training program of the Department of Human Resources, through which she has been able to place several parents in job training and in jobs.

Respecting the Participants

In order to make parents comfortable in the school setting, the staff must have genuine respect for the parents. Dr. Sparkman warned that "they can't talk down or think some people are better than others, because people can tell if you think that." You've just got to have the right person. The right person will adjust behavior to the person she's dealing with, but will believe in the worth of every individual." Jeannie Wallace confirmed the need for flexibility. "The way you approach people is a matter of feel: with some families you have to be the authority figure, with others you have to be a friend." The values of the staff can make or break the program; staff members, said Wallace, must share the program's respectful attitude.

A Limited Budget

Funding for the Parent Involvement Program is stable if not extensive. When the Parent Involvement Program started, Dr. Sparkman and Ms. Wallace decided "to use Head Start to identify the families, and that helped us financially as well."

The board, Ms. Wallace said, "is very generous to us." However, she said, "Finances enter into everything," from not being able to reach families who have no transportation for their children to her desire "to see the materials for the games and toys the parents make be of a better quality."

One indirect form of support for the program, said Wallace, comes from the participation of the 'haves' in the community in other Community Education courses and activities, which can then be "provided at no cost to those in the parent program and to others who honestly cannot pay the fee. If the 'haves' did not participate in those courses and activities, they would not be available to anyone."

Wallace felt that the program was meeting its primary goal: improving the children's school performance. "The teachers tell me that they could pick out the children from our program because of their ability to handle scissors and glue and crayons, and their interaction with other students, because we work with them on dealing with other people and handling their feelings and emotions."

What surprised Wallace was the effect of the program on the parents. "People who didn't know each other have become friends." In effect, the program has created a new sense of community. "They swap out recipes, car pool, visit with each other. One family's house-trailer burned and they lost everything. The other parents rallied and gave them a shower at which they got everything -- clothing, household items."

That generosity and sense of community extends to the schools. This year, participating parents have donated forty hours a week as volunteers tutoring children, shelving books in the library, and duplicating materials for teachers. They also have become more involved in their own education. "Not a meeting goes by," said Jeannie Wallace, "that I don't encourage them to enroll in the reading or the GED classes, anything that's offered. A lot enroll in the computer courses. It's understood that we'll waive the fee. The only thing we can't waive is the materials fee, if there is one. I just can't afford it." This year, eight parents enrolled in GED classes, and two in adult reading classes.

Dr. Sparkman said, simply, "We're building school relationships. When I was first an elementary principal, I thought the parents didn't care. They wouldn't come to conferences, wouldn't make their children came to school, they were belligerent with us. But I was just plain wrong. They were intimidated. They thought we didn't like them. There was a lack of trust."

"At first," said Jeannie Wallace, "some of the parents feel, 'Why should my kid have an education? I don't have an education. They can always go out and cut chicken gizzards for $3.35 an hour.' They feel hopeless. That's something we talk about at every meeting.

"Most of the parents in the program went to school here but they didn't know that they were welcome to come into the school at any time. But I guess poor people are made to feel like outsiders the world over. The program makes them feel welcome, a part of the place, important. It does work. They are much more confident in themselves. They also have greater participation in parent/teacher conferences, particularly the ones who are back in school or have gotten better jobs." According to Dr. Sparkman, "After being in the program, they're comfortable with educators, active in the school, comfortable in the school setting." Some of the parents who participate in the program become comfortable enough to come to the school on a regular basis as volunteers. This year, seven parents volunteered regularly in the schools.

Dr. Sparkman concluded that "once you've got parents on your side, they're the best allies you've ever had."

La Mesa, California

Community Education & Family Support and Education: "My personal philosophy is that Community Education provides people an opportunity to become better than they are. It gives them access to self-improvement, whether that's a high school diploma at a point of need in their lives or improving their parenting skills. Laid on top of that is the feeling that a lot of research shows that helping people become better parents can impact children all the way through school."

Larry Timmons, Director, Adult Education

Community Education in California

In California, Community Education is synonymous with Adult Education, which dates back to 1856, when the San Francisco Board of Education established an adult school. In 1926, the State Plan for Adult Education defined adult education, much like Community Education elsewhere, as "organizing community resources for community betterment." Adult Education can be offered through a K-12 school, a 9-12 school, or a community college; the majority of the funding for local programs comes from the state on the basis of local enrollment in Adult Education.

Proposition 13, which passed in 1978, made significant cuts in Adult Education services. Larry Timmons, Director of Adult Education at Grossmont Union High School, recalled the effect on local programming. "Prior to Proposition 13, Adult Education could offer any program approved by the local school board. If a member of the community came and he'd like a particular course, and we could find someone to teach it, we could offer it. When Proposition 13 passed, the state legislature designated eight program areas that we could offer, and two more were added a year later. A lot of politics were involved statewide. Parent education was one of the original eight -- the feeling is that they had a strong lobby at the time."

According to Ray Eberhard, Adult Education Specialist at the California Department of Education, Adult Education currently receives $300,000,000 from the state legislature and 10 million from the federal government. In 1987-88, Parent Education represented 5.1% of the total Adult and Community Education enrollment statewide, with a budget of $9,853,020.

Gail Zittel, Parent Education Specialist in the California Department of Education, observed that enrollment in Parent Education is dropping statewide in the face of a huge influx of adults who need English as a Second Language and Adult Basic Education. The ceilings Proposition 13 placed on program growth require programs to shift priorities within the 10 program areas as demands change. Zittel commented that a movement is growing among parent educators to integrate parent education into ESL curricula. "Some of the curricula address other basic competencies -- like economic and homemaking skills. Since we need to teach English, we might as well give information about parenting and child development as well."

Program Setting

Timmons described East County as "Almost a bedroom community -- a lot of people here work in San Diego. We're suburban, but we're rapidly becoming urban. The county we serve includes five incorporated cities and some unincorporated towns. The community is conservative in terms of family values, and the program probably reflects it. We do have an increasing number of working parents, and the program has tried to adapt to that."

Colette Fleming, Parent Education Coordinator at Grossmont Union High School, spoke of the needs that affect the state as a whole: the isolation of a transient population, and the affect of immigration. "People in California come from all over the U.S., and many of them have their extended families elsewhere, the grandmas and others who would be around to help out with parenting problems. We've been told by many people that the parenting classes serve as a support group. We also have parents for whom English is a second language. We do some things with bilingual teachers in targeted areas, but we also encourage parents to learn from each other across cultures."

Program Goals

The goals of Parent Education include, but are not limited to, providing opportunities for parents to: understand their role as their child's primary teacher; develop confidence in their abilities as parents; develop skills in child guidance, family communications, and problem solving; understand the concepts of growth and development and determine realistic expectations for their children; recognize their importance as an integral part of the educational process in the school; and identify and make use of community resources for the enrichment of family life.

Program History

According to Colette Fleming, "Parent Education was first offered in California in 1926. When this district started Adult Education in 1946, Parent Education was one of the recognized elements of Adult Education statewide. In 1946, Parent Education was just one class, and was much more allied to home economics.

"When I started, in 1971, we had twelve or fifteen classes, and we've grown considerably since then. We've tried to adapt as the community, and society at large, have changed. When I first started with the program, we had parenting classes for parents of children three to five; childbirth classes; and one or two effective parenting classes, offered during the day. It became clear as people were returning to the work force that we would have to change. We started a large program for parents of newborns to toddlers to fill that gap."

Fleming observed that one result of funding Parent Education as a part of Adult Education is that "the adults, not the children, are the students. Programs like parent-cooperative nurseries may fall into the category of Parent Education, but a parent component is required to collect apportionment for Parent Education. The child's attendance is not counted in parent education classes for the purpose of state apportionment."

Program Characteristics

Services

Parent education classes range from childbirth education to classes for parents of elementary-age children to the Early Intervention classes for parents of high school students. Classes range in intensity from three hours once a month for five months -- for working parents -- to parent-participation pre-school, which meets for three hours three days a week, and two evenings a month, for eighteen weeks. The most common intensity is three hours a week for eighteen weeks. The Parent Education Program offers a twelve-week Effective Parenting Class for high-risk parents, for which it accepts court referrals; and a class for jailed mothers.

Colette Fleming described the evolution of the parent-child classes: "We experimented with the age breakouts until we found what worked. I'm convinced that you shouldn't throw a wide gamut of ages all together. The solution we found is not to break down by age but by developmental and motor skills: newborn to crawling; crawling to independent walker; and so on. There are safety reasons to do this, too: you don't want walkers endangering the children who aren't walking yet."

Classes meet in a variety of locations: schools, adult schools, churches, a Parks Department building, and a jail. For the Early Intervention Class, said Fleming, "Many of the parents had negative personal experiences with school. So we used libraries, career centers, or lounges, to make the setting less intimidating."

Participants

Classes are open to all. Recruitment is largely through the Adult Education brochure, which goes out to 165,000 homes. "We've done follow-up studies," said Timmons, "and more than half come from the class schedule; the next largest is word of mouth; in the area of Parent Education, we have localized publicity in the elementary schools through the PTA newsletter and flyers sent home with the kids. We do spot publicity on Lamaze, for example, in OB-GYN offices. We have articles in the newspaper. Parent Education receives aggressive publicity through the drive and commitment of Colette Fleming."

The growth of the district has shifted the form of outreach. "Some of the communities we serve," said Fleming, "are fairly new -- they're building as we speak. So we go to shopping centers and put a flyer on every car. We also put up posters in libraries, grocery stores, laundromats. Public service announcements on radio and t.v. are great. That's a recent shift for us. We're also getting into desktop publishing, so our flyers look more professional. The other big draw for us is word of mouth. We've been here many years, and we're known as a quality program. Some people don't take the time to read or can't read, and need word of mouth." One exception, said Fleming, is that "If we're implementing a program in cooperation with a school district, the principal is responsible for the main advertising."

Two classes in Parent Education are targeted: one for high- risk parents, and one for jailed parents. "We found more and more people in our classes were needing much more than the usual techniques," said Fleming. "We started specialized classes, and then advertised to Child Protective Services and other agencies that we had these classes available. They've come to depend on us for these services for their clients."

Curriculum

Fleming explained the way the curriculum of Parent Education evolves: "The decision to offer a course can come in a number of ways. At state conferences, we share brochures, and I'm always on the lookout for new ideas. I try to keep track of trends. Or a principal from a feeder district will come to me and say there's a real need in his or her school for a particular class. I also encourage the Parent Education teachers to be innovative. Or it can be the parents calling and saying they want a particular class. If I have a credentialed teacher already available, it's easy; it's more challenging if I have to find a teacher with a certain specialty, like working with child abusers.

"We've had classes for parents who are adopting, parents of gifted children, parents of special education children. Sometimes a class will be successful, sometimes not. This summer we've started something new that's going beautifully: an evening class for parents of infants who had to go back to work right away and who are dealing with a lot of guilt. The class is for both parents. We received a lot of phone calls requesting this type of class.

"The courses have to follow a particular format. We submit the title to the State Department of Education for approval. Course outlines can always be audited during a compliance review or accreditation. We design our own curricula, using an eclectic approach. We have several hundred instructional handouts on a master list that we add to and subtract from on a regular basis. We're constantly on the lookout for up-to-date materials. Ideally, we'll put all our performance objectives in a computer, and use the cafeteria approach by teacher according to class need -- we're working toward that. We have parent libraries to supplement the handouts. We tend to steer away from standardized parenting approaches. People are

different and they need different things. I encourage teachers to do a needs assessment and change topics, within reason.

"The big thing for me is to help parents understand age-appropriate behavior. Child abuse comes from not understanding what's normal, and also from being raised in an environment where your own age-appropriate behavior was not accepted. Once parents understand that what their children are doing is normal, they can move on to deal with the important issues in a practical way.

"What's interesting about something that's happened over the past ten years, is that parents are a lot more sophisticated and read a lot more. Naturally, they get conflicting information, and they are very worried about their role. Parents are much less willing to go on their instincts. They need reassurance that their gut-level approach is usually okay once they understand what's age-appropriate. The teacher's task is to meet this need."

Coordination with Public School Programs

"Our parent preschool readiness activities," said Timmons, "are tailor-made to each elementary school. We do a lot of coordination between the parent preschool teachers and the kindergarten teachers: it's a natural flow." Fleming added that all classes also try to follow the district-wide age guidelines. "In our feeder districts, a child entering kindergarten has to be five by December 2nd. By the time the children are two, we lock into that: they have to be two by December 2nd, three by December 2nd, and so on, so that they'll be on target when they start school. We gear each preschool program to the curriculum of that district's kindergarten. That's a plus for them. We'll design it with them, and meet with their kindergarten teacher. We have the flexibility to design each program individually.

"Our programs for children prior to school age give the schools a support base: we're grooming parents to be room parents and volunteers. We're in tune with the elementary school system in that way." This support also takes the form of classes for volunteers tailored to the needs of each school. Timmons explained, "We have classes to train parent volunteers to work with elementary schools and junior high schools. The schools utilize parent volunteers heavily, and we train volunteers to be more effective working in the classrooms. We work closely with each school, so the class can be localized to the needs of the area."

A major cooperative effort between Parent Education and the high schools in the area is the Early Intervention Parenting Classes. Timmons explained how the class had come about. "I was on the district drop-out prevention task force for a few years, representing Adult Education. At one of the meetings, they were talking about the desire to provide intervention services to the parents of identified high-risk students, but there were no district funds to pay for such services. I suggested that if these could be put into an instructional format, we could possibly offer them as adult school Parent Education classes. The associate superintendent for the district strongly supported the idea. The adult school parent education coordinator, the district director of student services, and the principals of each of the district's ten high schools worked the details out cooperatively.

"The adult school parent education coordinator provided a core curriculum of basic parenting skills, including units on listening and communication; conflict resolution; decision making; recognition of common problems, including substance abuse; availability of school and community resources; and the importance of self-esteem. The basic curriculum was modified to meet the needs of each individual high school.

"Classes met in the evening and were free to parents. Counselors in the high schools identified the high-risk students and made home contacts to invite parents to participate. We piloted the program at four schools, but was so successful that we now offer it at all ten schools on a continuing basis."

Colette Fleming uses her linkages to other agencies in the community when she needs to make a referral. "If a parent is in one of our classes, and we determine a case of abuse or neglect we report it to Child Protective Services; if it can't be proved, but there are obvious problems, we have a staff development session about it, and refer the person to counseling with someone in the community. The parents are usually pretty willing to buy into that, and we try to get them back into classes. If they come into the classes, that's a form of self-referral to begin with, and pretty quickly they'll see they're just not handling things the way other people are and ask for help. That's why I belong to the Child Abuse Coordinating Council -- I never make a referral to an agency or private counselor with whom I'm not familiar. I know which ones have sliding-fee scales, for example."

Some agencies, said Fleming, "work with parents through home visits, and then graduate people into our classes." Others act as referral agents. "We deal with the Red Cross a lot with childbirth and parent-infant classes. In yesteryear, the Red Cross relied on volunteers to teach things like how to bathe your baby. But nowadays people are not available to volunteer. We can offer them people to teach classes, and they can act as a broker for us, because those are the things people think to call the Red Cross for. It meets both of our needs."

Colette Fleming described a close relationship with other agencies in the community as "imperative if you want to offer the kinds of classes that meet the needs of clients who need it the most. We're reaching the families with heavy-duty difficulties <u>because</u> we have a good network with the social service agencies and attorneys. Networking also helps avoid the duplication of services, which is a waste of taxpayers' money."

Finally, linkages to other agencies gave rise to two targeted classes: one for jailed parents; the other for court referred parents. The class for jailed parents built on an existing relationship. "Before we started parenting classes," said Fleming, "Adult Education had been offering high school diploma classes there for a long time. We worked with the sheriff's department, and we received very good administrative support."

Funding Sources

In 1987-88, the budget for Parent Education was $224,884; ninety-nine percent came from state aid, one percent from fees and charges.

"Ten years ago," Timmons explained, "legislation made our funding completely separate from the high school district. At one time, funds could go back and forth, which enabled a district to skim off ADA money or supplement Adult Education with its own money." He explained how the funding now works. "We get so many dollars from the state for each ADA unit. The units are calculated on the basis of a full time student for a full year, so we track student hours. 525 hours equals one unit of ADA."

The program in the women's detention center is a collaborative effort of funding with the sheriff's office. "That program works the same way in terms of ADA," said Timmons, "but the state has a separate fund for correctional education. And in that case, we only get eighty percent of the revenue limit. The thinking is that the detention facility provides things like utilities and custodial services, so we need less money."

Lessons from this Site

Larry Timmons asserted that a close relationship with other agencies is "very important. You need it to keep the curriculum in touch with what's going on, and to be aware of new needs, new social trends,

events, and resources to refer parents to. Most of what we do is informal networking. The teachers and Colette Fleming serve on the boards of a lot of agencies."

Fleming agreed that "the linkages are informal. I was born and raised here, so I know a lot of people, and have a real good network. Many of my colleagues are people with whom I went to school. So I can pick and choose the organizations to provide the linkages. I think it works better informally. There's a great turnover in social service agencies." Timmons relies on a community resource guide to keep him up to date. "The school district hires someone who has a lot of credibility as a retired counselor who goes around to each of these agencies once a year and interviews the people and publishes a community resource guide. We have access to that guide, and I have a good feeling that anything in the guide is a reputable agency."

"The difficulty of linkage," said Fleming, "is the high turnover. It's hard to keep track of. Every year we go through our list to update it, and I'm always shocked how many contact people are now different. That causes slippage, because you have to call to update them and bring someone new up to speed. We're one of the few stable community agencies around. We don't come and go with the wind." Timmons attributed that to Fleming. "Colette's been around a long time, which gives the program stability." He also attributed the program's strength and success to individual leadership. "I have to emphasize," he said, "that in large part the comprehensiveness and quality of the program is a result of Colette Fleming's expertise, knowledge, and commitment -- it shows in the program."

Serving a Large District

"Being a suburban district affects us in terms of class location," said Fleming. "We're scattered throughout the district. I don't think there are people who can't come to our classes unless they're way out in the back country, and then they'd have a problem accessing any kind of services. The eastern portion of the district is quite a ways into the mountains. The kids are bused into the high schools twenty-five or thirty miles. It would be the same inconvenience for parents. We have to have a lot of satellite classes, some of which we have on the elementary school campuses. That serves the schools' needs, too, in terms of school readiness -- these are the parents whose children will be entering their kindergarten in a few years.

"We try to have the full gamut of courses available in each location, and replicate the program so that there's something for everyone. People in this area have cars -- our public transportation is horrible. So people are used to driving -- if they can afford the gas, getting to us is not a problem. In our advertising, we tell people to get to us the first time, and we'll help arrange car pools and help them find child care. Some of our sites are still designated community schools, and have some funding for child care. So we offer in-kind services, and rotate parents through to help with child care. In the churches, we do the same thing, and rotate parents through the nursery. Additionally, the Regional Occupational Program child-care class can take a certain number of children. We help parents arrange their own child care or trades."

A Complex Relationship with the Schools

California state law requires that Adult Education programs be fiscally independent of other programs in the school district. "This means that there can be no commingling of funds," said Timmons. "From a fiscal standpoint, how we do has no impact on the high school district. There is, however, a genuine feeling that we generate community support for the public schools in general. In some school districts, the Adult Education people perceive themselves as second-class citizens, but I don't think that's true here. In this district, we have governing board support, and we try to do things to complement their goals."

Even with this support, however, the program is not uppermost in the minds of the governing board. "There have been recent changes," said Timmons. "The new people are supportive, but they also

respond to political pressure. As long as we have a quality program, and the community supports us, I think we will have their support and endorsement, but they are not as deeply involved as they are in the high school program, which I guess you can take to mean that they see that as the district's main mission."

Fleming confirmed that the school really becomes interested when its own students are affected. "Some people in our school district are not really aware of what we're doing in Parent Education. In general there's strong support for Adult Education. Our district is particularly interested in the Early Intervention program, because it serves parents of high-school-age children."

Fleming said that she would like "to try to expand the Early Intervention program from parents of teens to parents of school-age children. A lot of problems with teens start early, and by the time we get to them in high school, it's too late. In our case, Adult Education is part of a high school district, 9-12. We're not a unified district. We have eight feeder districts, and it means collaborative efforts on our part with a lot of separate entities, each with its own school board. Each district has its own political structure and pecking order -- eight or nine of them each with its own idiosyncracies. A unified K-12 school district would make things easier in this regard.

"When we do a program for a feeder district, we provide the service, but we're dependent on them for recruitment. You try it and you find out which people are dependable for that and which aren't. We've tended to do more for the schools identified as community schools because they were in the model of opening the school dusk to dawn and things like keys and custodians aren't as much of a problem."

The elementary schools aren't always aware of Parent Education. "Many people have gotten involved, but we're still under-utilized. Many staff just don't know we're here. We had a principal recently identify a need in his community and we provided four-week sessions for him -- even though we've been in this area for over thirty years, he'd only recently heard of us. However, to provide p.r. to our feeder districts would be a full-time job in itself."

Finding Adequate Facilities

"One aspect of the relationship to the 9-12 school," said Timmons, "is that we do have second call on facilities. Of course, everything is available in the evenings and on weekends, but in the daytime the buildings belong to them and we have to go into the community to find space. One exception to this is in the city of El Cajon, where the adult school has its own facility, including a separate Parent Education building.

"In some areas it's difficult to find space. We go out and knock on doors. Most of the churches are cooperative, and we pay them a nominal grant. Occasionally there may be some localized competition for space. Maybe a church will decide to offer child care or a preschool and want their space back. The biggest thing for us is storage of equipment and materials."

Fleming observed that the "trouble finding space ebbs and flows; parts of the community will grow, and then vacant rooms are no longer available. Then every group is vying for space. I've seen the cycles of this, and we're going into one now. We've done various things to compensate: we can rent a trailer and bring it on a school site. We have to be persistent in looking for space. We just found a building in a county park. We like to be close to people, in their neighborhoods, so part of the staff responsibility is finding space. We put notices out to parents, who are usually our greatest helpers in finding locations.

"Of course it's an advantage to have the playground already there, and running water in the classroom, which a church is not likely to have. In elementary school settings, we must be sensitive to teachers in the adjacent classrooms and develop good working relationships. Parenting programs can be an advantage to the school, because we provide them with volunteers."

The Cost-Effectiveness of Part-Time Staff

Larry Timmons argued that the use of part-time staff meant that "relative to other delivery systems in California, this is by far the most cost-effective. We hire on an hourly basis, not a contract basis. So it costs less, even though we pay a decent wage; also, some teachers teach enough hours to earn health and welfare benefits. Colette hires a lot of former elementary school teachers who stop teaching full time when they have their own family, but want to keep their skills up. The only disadvantage is that we can lose some of our better teachers to the elementary schools because of the better contract.

"The Parent Education staff is more cohesive as a staff than other programs in Adult Education. Only two programs, Parent Education and ESL, have a district-wide coordinator. The Parent Education staff has staff development, special handbooks, and a lot of support in terms of materials."

Fleming agreed that although "the pay is less, because the level of funding is less, people in Adult Education are permitted to be much more innovative. They're not tied down -- it's a good place for creative people." Compared to the K-12 schools, said Timmons, "We also have enormous flexibility. If a need disappears, or a new need appears, we can cut back or add quickly to meet the community needs, as opposed to a more bureaucratic arrangement. If there's an overload, we just add sections." Fleming confirmed that "we can continually adjust the curriculum to meet the needs of students, unlike the K-12 schools, which have a much more complex method of changing curriculum.

"Our teachers are offered a great deal in terms of staff development. It is important to keep up with what's going on in the field. The point of having diversity on the staff is that it must be shared or there's no point in having it. The Parent Education staff is very cohesive. They really share outside the classroom."

One advantage to the recognition of Parent Education as a category of Adult Education statewide is that "parent educators have a strong network through which they can meet and support one another."

Self-Selected Parents

Relying on a brochure for outreach may mean that the parents who come to courses are self-selected. "Unfortunately," said Timmons, "the largest percentage of the people we reach are parents who would be good parents anyway, just as when I was in secondary education, when you had open houses the parents who came were not the ones you needed to see. Parents who want courses are motivated to seek them out. But with a voluntary program, that's the way it is: you reach the ones who need it least. It's not that it's not a good program, but it's just a fact of life. The ones we reach least effectively are possibly the ones who care least about self-improvement or becoming better parents. That's true of all of Adult Education. If they don't have the self-motivation, we're not going to see them."

Fleming agreed that Parent Education may be "missing the group that doesn't know we exist because our main form of advertising is in the brochure. Many people just don't get far enough along in the brochure to see our classes. They think the courses offered are only ESL, computer classes, home economics, that sort of thing. We joke and say we're the best kept secret in the county."

The obvious exceptions are the court-referred parents and the jailed parents, where Fleming made a decision to target certain groups. Serving court-referred parents carries its share of "extra work," said Fleming, "like calling the case worker, and going back and forth trying to get parents extra help." But the teachers can work with parents in a way that case workers may not be able to do. "The parents are real negative about the 'system,' which for them is the mean people taking their children away. They see the parenting teacher as an advocate."

Responding to the Demographics

Even in a community that is conservative in its family values, more and more women are entering or re-entering the work force. The Parent Education program has responded to these changes, in a way that kept the program alive and expanding. Fleming explained that "As we've evolved, we've dropped the things that are less popular. We found that people dropped out because the primary family member participating goes back to work. We try to get them to come to the evening classes. But the trend has been away from programs for preschool age children. At that age, three to five, there's a lot more competition with private industry offering programs. The Parent Education programs that are in jeopardy statewide are the ones that stayed exclusively with the parents of pre-school-age children, because that's when the parent attendance drops off. That's when parents go back to work. Our program has flourished by expanding into other areas of need."

The Need for Fees

After Proposition 13 passed, the state placed a ceiling on individual programs based on their ADA [Average Daily Attendance] units prior to the cuts, with 2.5% added for growth. In 1986, said Colette Fleming, the money appropriated for growth "was diverted into ESL and GAIN, the welfare-reform initiative -- recipients have to enroll in vocational or remedial education." The cap on funding has remained at the 1986 levels.

Looking ahead, Timmons said that "Funding could be a factor not to offer services in the future. The state imposed a growth cap on Adult Education statewide: we can grow, but not collect more state money than the cap. We're lucky in that we have been a few units below the cap for a few years. The areas within Adult Education are not currently in competition with each other, but if we exceeded the funding cap, we might have to sit down and prioritize internally and decide which areas would be allowed to grow."

Even now, with the ADA funding, Parent Education needs to charge small fees, from five to twenty dollars a semester. "The expendables and supplies are expensive," Fleming explained, "so we cover them through parent fees. The equipment, which comes out of the budget, are much more expensive than for some other programs. We're funded on the basis of attendance. We design our classes so that parents can attend less with the child as the children get older -- the children will still come three times a week, but we'll only have nine or ten parents in attendance. The ideal class size for funding purposes is 18 - 24 people. So we do some income averaging."

"Parent education is probably not more expensive than other areas," said Timmons, "but there are additional costs: for example, insurance for the children, and instructional supplies. We also have a provision that we waive the fee for anyone who can't afford it, and absorb the cost out of our total budget."

Charging larger fees would clearly change the nature of the parent education classes. "Without the state funding," said Fleming, "we couldn't offer Parent Education at such reasonable rates -- next to nothing -- and so we wouldn't be serving the broad base of people, or the people who need it most, like the court referrals -- they'd be shut out. Financially we're stable, because our program has a good track record, but I continually beat the bushes for support to keep us in the forefront of people's minds. In my opinion, parenting is the most important thing we do."

Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Community Education & Family Support and Education: "I don't know where else we'd fit in. As a program, we respond to specific community needs. We're the essence of community education: being there for adults."

Karen Meyer, Teacher on Special Assignment

Community Education in Florida

Community Education began in Florida in 1961, and generally takes the form of Community Schools, opening the school facilities for community use. The state legislation, passed in 1970, was called the "Community School Act." Out of approximately 2,000 K-12 districts, Florida currently has 350 Community Schools.

Since 1971, the Florida legislature has funded Community Education through grants-in-aid. Grants may cover up to half of the community education coordinator's salary and may also include part-time clerical assistance, materials and supplies. Grants depend on meeting certain indicators of quality, the first of which is maximum use of facilities. In FY 1986-87, the appropriation totaled $2,337,221. The majority of funding for Community Education comes from the local school district's general operating fund; programs run as part of local school K-12 districts.

Florida also involves businesses in Community Education through the Community Education Foundation, which encourages support for Community Education from the private sector and promotes the creation of local Community Education Foundations.

Program Setting

Karen Meyer, Teacher on Special Assignment, described the Fort Lauderdale area as one "of high transience. People here tend to move every two to three years, and they often come from northern states, so they have no close family, no support, no roots. This area also has a large Haitian population."

The Curriculum Supervisor of Community Education, Linda Lopez, added that the "highly transient population is a major deterrent to keeping people in classes. There's an amazing flow in, flow out, flow back. It's true of the upwardly mobile families as well as the lower income families. And we have a pitiful system of mass transit. It's completely inadequate. So if you don't have a ride or a car, you can't come. Both of our centers are on bus lines, we made sure of that, but it doesn't really help, because the buses are very erratic."

Program Goals

Amanda's Place seeks to help parents meet the challenge of being parents by providing parenting and child development information and non-judgmental support. Linda Lopez stated the goal of Amanda's Place: "to make parents the best parents they can be. We hope they will learn to read their children's cues and respond appropriately. We want them to learn to enjoy their children. We look at child abuse on a continuum. At the worst end, you have a dead child, but the beginning can be spanking. Our philosophy is that psychological abuse can be as bad or worse than physical abuse. We feel we're preventing abuse by teaching effective discipline and coping strategies."

Program History

Karen Meyer explained that Amanda's Place "is the successor to Amanda the Panda, a series of brochures written and created in 1980 by Glen Rediehs at Valencia Community College. He's been in parenting education for years. He put together monthly brochures for the first year of a child's life. The brochures are used internationally. A volunteer meets and enrolls the new parents while they are still in the hospital."

Linda Lopez started an Amanda the Panda program in Broward County in 1984. "We went to maternity hospitals in the area and asked if they were interested in participating. If they were, we would train their volunteers to deliver the first of the series of thirteen pamphlets: the one for newborns. The way we used Amanda the Panda was to stuff the packet with Broward County information and make it clear that the school system was excited about the new member of its family. Then, if the parents wanted, they would subscribe and receive Amanda the Panda free in the mail each month for thirteen months.

"Every few months, we had a 'Panda Party,' and invited all the subscribers -- mom, dad, and baby. It was primarily for peer support, but we also had a theme to each party, and built everything around the theme. We invited a nutritionist or a pediatrician to speak, and held the parties in community centers, malls, churches. We started slow, but they really grew big. We did an evaluation after each one asking parents to identify what they liked most and what they didn't like. After two years, the consistent comment we were getting was that parents wanted to have these gatherings much more regularly. Also, at the end of the thirteen months of getting Amanda the Panda, we would do an evaluation. Repeatedly, parents asked, 'What do I do now?'

"I thought of having a center at which we could have a permanent Panda party. I asked Dr. Rediehs for permission to use the name, because he had copyrighted the Amanda the Panda series. Immediately, we looked for a location. Our department opened a new center for Adult and Community Education and I asked if Amanda's Place could have a room. We applied to the state for a demonstration grant, $75,000 of Community Instructional Services funds to transform a very old and dilapidated environment into something childproof and make it really inviting. Then we got two teachers -- I have to say, I think Karen [Meyer] is the reason we're so successful. We had a waiting list three weeks after the Pompano site opened, and already we knew we had to expand. In February, 1987, we opened the Fort Lauderdale site at Dillard, and now we have three outreach sites."

Program Characteristics

Services

Amanda's Place offers parenting and child development information through group activities, make-it/take-it classes, workshops and discussions, guest speakers, and library materials. Amanda's Place also hosts holiday parties and conducts field trips for parents and children. Play and learn classes are divided by the age of the child: 0-6 months; 6-12 months; 11-18 months; and 18-24 months.

Parents have had input all along into the structure of services. In the planning stages, Meyer explained, the Amanda the Panda coordinator "sent a survey to everyone getting the Amanda series to find out what issues the parents wanted addressed, and where they wanted the location to be. She got 600 responses out of 3,000, and the services were based on that initial feedback.

"For our grand opening weekend, we scheduled guest speakers for three days. We still have guest speakers; professionals are always willing to donate their time. It's good for them, because it keeps their programs visible before an audience they're not always reaching, and it's good for parents, because it keeps them informed.

"The special events planning came from my many years of preschool training, and serves as a way to maintain enthusiasm. That way, we can respond to parents' questions about what we're going to do next, and it keeps us from getting burnt out and bored. The holidays were a way to maintain participation, and we get enormous support in the way of donations from community businesses.

"We're continually adapting to the parents's needs. For example, the alumni class. We started out serving children up to one year, then expanded to two, then went to three. The parents said they weren't ready to separate from their children, and there were no low-cost parent/child programs for two-year-olds -- and only a few programs for children younger than that -- out there, so we created the transition class. The teacher who does the sibling class leads it. She has a background in preschool, and has made it closer to preschool classes, with the parents and children gradually separating while in the same room, which makes the transition easier for them when they go into a preschool program. We also expanded the Saturday classes in response to parent demand."

Lopez added that "we built in the sibling component because a lot of moms couldn't find or afford child care. We started a Dad's night, and now we have two classes for dads, and hired a male teacher to work with them. That's one time the mothers get together outside the age groups of their children. We have a Mothers' Mingle while the dads group meets with the children.

Participants

Amanda's Place is open to all parents who live in Broward County or have delivered a child in a Broward County hospital and have a child under the age of two. In 1987-88, the two centers and three outreach sites served 736 families.

Lopez feels the program is most effective at reaching the middle-class. "I would say lower-middle, but it's really middle-class. The people who were two-income families, and are now living on one income, and struggling to make ends meet. They can't afford extras, like going out to dinner, or going to the movies. For the moms, this is often the only 'out' time they have. Time and again we hear moms say, 'Amanda's Place saved my sanity,' or 'You saved my marriage.'"

Classes offer alternatives for working parents. "The people who come Tuesday through Friday tend to have one parent at home," said Meyer. "The evening and weekend classes draw more working parents."

The demand for the program has been overwhelming. Once in the class, said Meyer, "Most people stay unless they go back to work or move. Many alumni come back with their second child. In each class, we usually only take two or three off the waiting list, which means if you don't enroll before your child is four months old, you may have to wait another eight months."

Lopez has investigated the few drop-outs from the program. "Not many leave, but we do follow up. They have to register officially when they come in, which generates a card file. While they are in the program, we use the card to track the baby's growth and development. If someone isn't coming, we will follow through and call. Often it's because they've moved, or the woman's having problems. The moving is primarily for financial reasons. Or they leave because of extended illness."

The main source of information about the program, said Meyer, is still "through the Amanda the Panda brochure and the one-on-one contact with the volunteer in the hospital. We also receive a lot of publicity, and press coverage. Sometimes we'll send out schedules to the 5,000 parents on the Amanda the Panda list and our own list, throughout the county. Most people seem receptive to the one-on-one meeting. We also get referrals from Parents Anonymous, hospitals, and psychologists."

Although Amanda's Place is a universal program, open to anyone in the county, the staff have found it necessary to ***target*** several groups through special classes and outreach sites. "This area has enormous

wealth and enormous poverty," said Meyer. "We've tried to meet both in the range of our scheduling, and by having the outreach centers." One outreach site serves the participants in a Title XX child-care center and also serves abusive parents who are in a therapeutic program in the child-care center.

Amanda's Place also serves teen parents. "That came about," said Lopez, "because we were housed in a Community School. The teens were coming to the Pompano Center to complete high school while their children were in child care in another location. They would walk past Amanda's Place and see all the moms and children, and talked to their teachers about wanting to see what was going on. So the teachers came to us, and we worked out a schedule. That's a case of expanding as the need expanded." Amanda's Place, said Lopez, "Gives teens the opportunity to link up to less at-risk moms. We have a mentoring system, which gives the two groups a chance to merge."

Curriculum

The curriculum at Amanda's Place is extremely flexible, less a discrete package of information than recommendations to create an atmosphere for learning. Karen Meyer gave one explanation for this open-ended approach. "I'd say the person who most influenced our philosophy is Brazelton -- his idea of empowering parents. The heart of it is parents sharing with each other. Teachers have information to share, and we can give knowledge, but it's up to them and what stage they are in how and when they internalize it. We provide the atmosphere and the foundation; parents make the decision about how it impacts on their life."

The curriculum combines parent development and child development, drawing from parents' own experiences. "We started out with about 100 books on infant activity," said Meyer. "The direction we took was to fill in what we saw as missing in the existing curricula: parent development and child development at the same time. It's ideal when the parent's issues complement the child's issues. We find that parents are not necessarily going to read handouts. Maybe I could highlight what's important and they'll read it in the bathroom. But if it's not a hands-on format, it's not going to work. You need to personalize the information. For example, I know I can't teach about language acquisition in a lecture. So I start with a round-robin of questions and get every parent to share an example, and we go from there."

The flexibility of the curriculum allows teachers to address any issues the parents raise. "Parents have an opportunity during the workshop time to direct the conversation," said Lopez. "They might be working on a make and take, and instead of talking about the developmental skill involved, talk about something a parent brings up. At first, the topic may seem off the wall, but then two or three parents might say, 'That's not so off the wall, I've been feeling it too.' There's the temporary relief of hearing that your concern is shared, and then we might have a speaker come in and do a presentation on that concern, or direct the parent to counseling, if it's needed."

Coordination with Public School Programs

For parents, Amanda's Place is often an introduction to other school programs, like vocational education. "But our strongest linkage," said Lopez, "is probably with the teen parents. We work with the teen parent coordinator, social worker, and teachers, and work out a schedule for the teen parents so they can have their classes and come to Amanda's Place.

"We also work with exceptional education. If we have a child who is developmentally delayed, we make referrals into that program. They work a lot with the hearing impaired, and we refer children to them for that."

"We also have access to the bilingual education department," added Meyer. "That's another plus of being in the school system. They have books and catalogues we can use. One of the people in that department did an article for our newsletter on raising bilingual children."

Linkage to the Surrounding Community

Initially, Lopez involved the community by soliciting the help of senior citizens. "When we were first doing Amanda the Panda, we found that serving such a large county necessitated community assistance. So we turned to the nursing homes for help. We had a program of manipulative and motor skills for the frail elderly that was funded under Community Instructional Services. When the cutbacks came, the nursing homes were looking for something to replace those programs. So we brought them Amanda the Panda and asked them to help us with collating, preparation, stapling. One result was an upswelling of support in the community for the program. We also won the President's Volunteer Action Award, out of a field of 1,800 nominees nationwide."

Once Amanda's Place opened, said Lopez, linkages with community agencies became "vital to our existence. We couldn't survive without it. It makes us more credible with the community, and it gives us a place to turn. We refer to them, they refer to us. We're a ready source of distribution: if they have information to go out, we can insert it right in our flyer."

A number of agencies refer to Amanda's Place; in one case, this led to the creation of a specialized class. "In one area," said Lopez, "we primarily serve court-mandated parents who may or may not have their children with them. The court-mandated group got started because the court asked us to be the agency to provide parenting classes. For years, the courts had been calling me as the Community Education person in the district to ask me about parenting classes -- where are they this term? They asked us to please form something specifically for the court-ordered parents. They were primarily trying to refer parents with children three and under, so when we opened Amanda's Place, I let them know."

Special classes serve the Haitian community. Those classes, arranged jointly with the Haitian Catholic Mission, have evolved over time. "Originally," said Meyer, "our Haitian classes were monthly, and were conflicting with other meetings at the Haitian center. Now the Haitian center provides transportation, and the classes are weekly."

Broward General Hospital refers families to Amanda's Place from its developmental evaluation clinic; Amanda's Place makes referrals there to test for developmental delay. In the case of emotional or psychological difficulties, said Lopez, "Some of the teachers and the other staff have social work backgrounds, and do initial counseling here. If we see that someone's on the edge, we have a referral system in place. We see what the financial situation is -- we have a private psychologist who works with us and does a lot of free workshops for us, and we refer to him. Or if we need a social-service referral, we have linkages there, and to mental health, Parents' Anonymous, to the HRS caseworkers."

Amanda's Place also exchanges training and information with a number of other programs. "The Child Care Connection is another link," said Meyer. "We do staff training for them. We also have a nice relationship with the Nova Family Center. They have a terrific program there; that's where Marilyn Segal is. We do workshops together, learn from each other, call each other for help. The Florida Cooperative Extension is a source of workshops on nutrition and time management, and they have pamphlets on child development and life-management skills."

In addition, Linda Lopez has actively sought the support of local businesses, in line with the statewide approach to involving the private sector in Community Education. She gave an example of one such partnership: "Amanda the Panda mails out 10,000 to 13,000 pieces of mail a month. It's a phenomenal task to sort out which babies are which age and get which Amanda the Panda. We tried to manage the data on our little Apple computer, and it was just impossible. So I went to industry, and a company called Urban

Data Processing just adopted us. We turn our subscription cards in to them, and they keep our records and print up free labels, I would say they have donated $60,000 worth of services in the past two years.

"We also have a partnership with the local electrical union. We've had some theft, and they'll replace things for us. For example, the stereo for our music time was stolen, and they replaced it. They also fund awards for our volunteers."

Funding Sources

In the Broward County Schools, the director of Community Education is an assistant principal who reports to a principal; the county has an assistant director for Adult and Community Education who reports to the director of Vocational, Technical and Adult Education. Lopez's situation at the time Amanda's Place opened was unusual. She worked for Community Instructional Services, an alternate delivery system for Community Education and did not report to a principal, but directly to the assistant director for Adult and Community Education. The 1983 State Plan for Community Education includes Community Instructional Services among sources of state funding for Community Education. At the time Amanda's Place was founded, the Regional Coordinating Council was the governing body for the special demonstration-project funding.

"The Regional Coordinating Council," Lopez explained, "is made up of the governor's appointees plus one representative of the school board -- the Superintendent or his designee, who in our case is the head of our department, Adult, Vocational, Technical Education -- and the president of the Community College or his designee. The RCC was responsible for deciding which programs were funded. Before that, the state money came into the region and was divided between the Broward County Schools and the Community College with two-thirds going to the schools, and one-third to the college. Then an RFP funding formula was initiated, in which a proposal had to be submitted to the coordinating council. Community Instructional Services (CIS) had identified seven significant problem areas they wanted programs to address. The last year before the cut, they added an eighth -- parenting.

"In 1985-86, we went to the Regional Coordinating Council and requested $75,000, and received it. Then we went back to them for $20,000 of additional funds for the sibling room. Pompano opened, and was operating successfully for a year, and in 1986-87 we asked for $70,000 for a second site. When we didn't have a building, the school board bought us a trailer for $30,000." Amanda's Place also received CIS demonstration grants for both the sibling class and the teen class. After that year, the legislature subsequently eliminated CIS funding. Programs formerly under CIS had the option of shifting to funding through life-long learning, which used a formula that based reimbursement on average attendance, which would have forced a shift in the structure of the program.

"When the legislature cut CIS," said Lopez, "we had zero funds. That's when the parents lobbied the school board, which ultimately gave us $136,000. That, plus $60,000 of carry-over funds, got us through. For next year, we were cut out of the growth budget for the schools. Through our department's efforts, as well as the assistance of the school board, we were reinstated, and the school board gave us $226,000 and put $72,000 into the expansion of the teen parent program."

In 1987-88, the school district covered 79 percent of the program's budget. Carry-over funds from the CIS demonstration grant covered 18 percent; fundraising covered the remaining 3 percent.

Lessons from this Site

Positive Contact with the Schools

"When the program is in a school, said Meyer, "All the classes that are available, like GED, get higher visibility. Amanda's Place is often the first access to the school system for the parents. Prior to this, they're both working, or maybe they're both still working, and they're not likely to read the Adult Education

flyer. Through us, they make contact with other school board programs. The contact is positive, which makes a difference in subsequent participation."

"If you go into a storefront for a program," said Lopez, "you're just going for the program, and not getting any other services." Lopez added that the program excites parents about their children's education. "It gives people an opportunity to come into school who haven't come in many years, and have no other reason to come. It gives them a vested interest in education. They come from outside the area, and what they know about the public school is the scuttlebutt or what's in the newspapers. Prior to coming to our program, they've talked about sending their kids to private school."

The school doesn't yet offer any transitional program between Amanda's Place and the K-12 program, unless the child is handicapped. Although a formal linkage does not exist, said Meyer, "We're in close contact with the Early Childhood department, and are included in their meetings." However, some of the approaches of Amanda's Place may diverge from K-12 procedures. "We present parents with information on Gesell, which is used for kindergarten screening in this county, and has been controversial. But we're helping parents become parent advocates, not school board advocates. Parents are getting information about early childhood and what's appropriate for kids, which shapes what they expect and demand from the schools when they get there."

Emphasis on Parent/Child Activities

From the outset, the core of the program has been parent/child activities. "Before we opened," said Lopez, "I did a research study on participation in parenting classes. I saw a steady decline. Community schools might offer ten to fifteen parent classes, but only one would go. And in that one, the attrition got so bad that even it would shut down. The traditional programs just weren't working. It seemed that parents didn't want to go without their children. We don't want just to teach parents but to teach them with their children."

"The program schedule began with play and learn classes for four different age groups and two parenting workshops per day," said Meyer. "Along the way, we found that it was impractical to have workshops separate from the play and learn classes. Not everyone would stay for the workshops, so some people were getting the information, and others weren't. After about two months, we settled into 1 1/2 hour classes."

Flexibility and Quality Control

Currently, the teachers adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of the parents, and tailor it to the needs of the special classes. Meyer gave the example of teen parents, who "tend to interact more aggressively with their kids, pinching and poking. We have activity sheets for them to fill out every week. On each sheet, we ask something about the child -- my child likes this -- and a question for the parent about her relationship to her family, what it was like for her as a child. How, for example, did her parents discipline her? What worked? We try to get them to consider, what is more important: that the child obey, or that the child learn to make good decisions?"

Similarly, in the Haitian class, said Meyer, "We adapt the program for that community. We use the same themes, because we feel they are universal, but they are implemented differently by the teacher of the Haitian class. She comes to us from the Haitian mission -- they give her release time to teach the class. There's a huge cultural gap; for example, the Haitians don't have a history of valuing play for young children."

Both Meyer and Lopez spoke of the virtues of a curriculum that was flexible enough to respond to parents' immediate needs. With expansion, other issues come to the fore. "We've thought about the

issue of quality control as we expand," said Lopez. "I don't have someone to coordinate Amanda's Place district-wide. If we get bigger, I'm going to want that. I don't want to be all over the district unless the quality is uniform."

Uniformity raises questions about the responsiveness to parents' needs that both Meyer and Lopez felt was critical to the success of Amanda's Place. "I like the flexibility," said Meyer, "of being able to spend two weeks on something if it comes up. We're now in the process of putting together a curriculum. Now that we have the outreach centers, we have extra funds to pull it together, to get some consistency in the different sites, although the sites can still adapt and model. Two of us are writing the curriculum -- we have two years of questions and activity sheets to draw from. It's a huge outline of parenting topics. Right now, it takes the awareness of the teacher to personalize the classes, and it's really effective. I wonder if it will be as effective if we keep growing. If we become more formal, will we lose the spontaneity?"

Parent Support

From the beginning, Amanda's Place has emphasized parent development as well as child development. "The parents are not just looking to see what we've done for their children," said Meyer. "It's also a woman's program. Mothers are very willing to deny themselves. They may have been a professional a year ago, but suddenly they can't imagine themselves doing anything other than being a mother. You can have a mother frightened because she might hurt her child, one of the invisible cases -- she's not 'at-risk,' because there's no history of abuse, it's just that one time, but the mother's know they can call us and say, 'Talk me through this.' They know they can call us at home. It's very informal.

"I think we're very effective at being there prior to the inevitable crises. When the baby is born, there's an initial glow about the family. But we see a lot of divorces during the toddler years. Suddenly there are mothers coming in and saying, 'Help! Being a single parent wasn't part of my picture.' We walk them through it. We're also very good at helping parents transition back to work.The first urgent thing is to help mothers make a decision about child care. They're absolutely at a loss, especially if the child is younger than 2 1/2, when the choices are limited."

The support is practical as well as emotional. Amanda's Place introduces mothers to community resources and options for their own personal development. "For example," said Lopez, "at Pompano, across the hallway from us is a career center where a lot of our mothers go for career exploration and end up going into retraining programs. A spin-off of our program is that we end up feeding other programs. We let the mothers know what options there really are in the community. We have a vast referral system."

Both Lopez and Meyer pointed to the bonding of the mothers as an effect of the program they had not anticipated. "Many parents," said Lopez, "thought they were coming to learn about their child, and they are, but the benefits of the interaction with other parents are that they realize how isolated they were before."

One outgrowth of this bonding is the parent advocacy group, SOAP [Save Our Amanda's Place] that formed when the funding crisis hit Amanda's Place. When the legislature cut CIS funds to zero, SOAP waged a highly organized lobbying campaign on behalf of Amanda's Place, targeting legislators, and trying to get the legislature to consider CIS funding in a special session. The campaign focused on Amanda's Place as a preventive for potential child abuse. Eventually, Meyer recalled, "One mom was the organizer, and said, 'Let's go to the school board.' They said to the administration, 'You can't abandon us.'" The school board agreed to pick up where the legislature had left off.

"Now the group influences what we're doing and where we're headed. For example, they decided to do something more for the teen moms. They put together baskets for the children and the moms saying, congratulations for finishing the year, and they exchanged phone numbers, so we can get a mentor moms program going."

The group has gone from formation to lobbying to having a formal position on the staff. "The former president of SOAP," said Lopez, "is now working on the staff as a paid parent liaison. That happened through the pushing and prodding of the group. She was a very quiet person who became a great advocate for us and went to Tallahassee to lobby."

Free vs. Fee-Based Services

Lopez described Amanda's Place as "very labor-intensive. The number of classes adds up. $174,000 of the budget is just salaries. We're not spending it on travel and extras. So far, we've always found a way, expanding classes, asking businesses for supplies, doing fundraisers."

Still, Amanda's Place has had to struggle for financial survival; recently, the school board proposed that the program become fee-driven: parents would have to pay a registration fee, and the nominal Adult General Education fee of 22 cents/hour. Scholarships would be available for parents unable to afford the fee.

Karen Meyer explained the difficulties that charging fees might cause. "These are middle-class families that have gone from two incomes to one and couldn't afford our services if they had to pay for them. These are people who are making enormous sacrifices. A free program grants access to all members of the community."

A different funding structure, said Lopez, might also cut down on the current level of flexibility in the curriculum. "One of the beauties of categorical funding is that we're not locked into a curriculum framework."

When Lopez did her initial research on parenting classes, she found that "classes were formally structured in such a way that precluded parents from maintaining the mandatory attendance. They were working one job, maybe two, and they couldn't participate at the level that was comfortable for them. Also, unfortunately, classes that are under the category of 'Personal Improvement' come with a higher fee. Parenting was considered personal improvement, with a charge of thirty dollars for nine weeks, and the parents might not be able to make all the classes."

The present structure of the program, Meyer explained, allows parents to set their own schedules according to their own needs. "Because we're not fee supported, people can come whenever they want. They don't feel they're investing in a product, or feel cheated if they can't come. Some people only come once a month, but for them it's important to come that once a month."

Targeted Services within a Universal Approach

"After we had the first site opened," Lopez recalled, "the Regional Coordinating Council mandated that we try to serve a broader spectrum of people and actively recruit the at-risk and minorities. They thought the program was just great. The only question was over the location. They didn't want us to change our goals, they just wanted us to make the same program more accessible to minorities."

The irony, said Meyer, was that "We put our second site in a low-income neighborhood to try to target that population, and the middle-class parents who were on the waiting list at the first site flocked there in such numbers that we had to close the second site to the general public a few days a week to meet the special needs of the neighborhood."

The effort to recruit at-risk families demands specialized outreach. "We rely heavily on print for the Pompano center," said Lopez, "but we can't do that everywhere. That's why we came up with the video that

we take to HRS. We take our tape to HRS clinics, and our teachers sit and talk with the babies and the moms while they are waiting for services. We also participate in social service outreach fairs. Our initial strategy was to network with minority leaders, but a personal approach, one on one, is what works."

Reaching parents deemed to be "at-risk" is not simply a matter of location. "The easiest way to target at-risk families," said Meyer, "is if they are already identified, and attached to an agency, like HRS, or the Haitian Mission, or the teens. But often the referrals we get from the hospitals don't have transportation. Maybe they need home visits, or maybe we just need to be in more places."

"We're no longer advertising," said Lopez, "because we have a waiting list, but if a parent is referred, we take her right away. The at-risk or minorities have no waiting list. They come into the program immediately." In spite of expanded outreach efforts, Lopez felt the program still had difficulty reaching the minority population. "We're now up to twenty per cent minority enrollment." This figure represents a little over half of the 37.4 percent minority enrollment of the K-12 system.

"I have some thoughts on why that is," said Lopez. "We do have classes at night for working parents, but working moms are tired. If they are single parents, both parents and children are exhausted: the child's been in child care all day, and the mom has been working, and the last thing they want to do is pile in the car again. We do have a Saturday program, but that's the one day these moms have to themselves. Most of our minority community is very involved in the churches, so Saturday is their one free day. The mothers who attend the program regularly are the ones who have left work.

"We are starting to use the church as a basis for outreach and recruitment. We've been putting announcements in church bulletins, and making announcements there. This has the potential to be successful."

Along with the decision to target parents with special needs came the issue of whether to serve them in the existing classes or hold separate classes. Lopez laid out the issues involved: "The beauty of our program is peer support, feeling you're all in the same boat, but if one woman comes in with her child in an Aprica stroller, and she's just gotten out of a Rolls Royce, and the woman next to her has no shoes, they both get scared and put off, and we may never see either of them again. There's a big gap, which socially isolates both groups."

Similarly, said Lopez, "We feel the court-mandated parents are better with each other, they have similar issues, and their concerns are different from other parents. Language is another big barrier. We started out mixing groups, but now we have a day set aside at the Fort Lauderdale center that's just for the Haitian community. The classes are taught in Creole. We feel that it's more important that the mothers are comfortable, because then they'll come. We've stopped emphasizing trying to make them more American -- we're just trying to help them be better parents."

The Need for Personal Linkages

The linkages that Lopez called "vital" to the survival of Amanda's Place tend to be with a person rather than an agency. "We have nothing contractual. It's all verbal, which is amazing in a district of this size. But I prefer to do it this way. I feel that if we can get a key person sold, we're on our way. Usually, if we can get them out here to see Amanda's Place, they're sold. We also go to the various agencies and do presentations on various topics. We formed a linkage that way with the Broward Addiction Rehabilitation Center. They heard us speak, and asked us to start working with the cocaine mothers and their addicted children, which we've started this fall."

That kind of outreach can be a slow, somewhat laborious process. "I've learned that you don't form coalitions with agencies overnight," said Lopez. "The addiction program took over a year to get going. I thought it would happen much quicker."

Another issue, particularly in a county the size of Broward, is that, as Meyer put it, "there's no one agency to hook all the other agencies together." Moreover, agencies that cooperate on some projects may be in competition for dollars on other. "We've competed for money from the Juvenile Services Board," said Lopez. "They had $100,000 for a teen parent program, and we were competing with the people we usually work with -- Broward General Medical Center, which has a program for at-risk infants and teen parents -- we work with them all the time, and then we had to go tooth and nail for the money."

Transportation

The size of the county and the quality of transportation make serving all eligible families difficult. "Our public transportation system is not ideal," said Meyer. "We've discovered we have to have outreach centers. We can't expect everybody to get to us. My largest frustration is that I'd like to get into more places. We need to expand county wide." Lopez agreed. "People in the far south of the county can't get to the main centers. We invite them, but we don't expect them to show up. Now the county is expanding west rapidly, but it's a part of the county that's isolated: there's virtually no public transportation at all, so right now, you're looking at half an hour to an hour in the car with the baby." However, said Meyer, that once again raises the issue of which populations to serve: "It's a predominantly middle-class area, and there's a tension about whether we should grow in that direction."

Referral and Follow-up

As a voluntary program, said Meyer, "We're the nice guys in the system. The essential services are far more bureaucratic. We need a liaison, someone to be a friendly face for the scary, necessary services. We sit down with parents and make the phone calls. I'd say maybe half of them get services. The difficulty in linkage comes when it's hard to follow up a referral for an at-risk family. What if their phone gets disconnected, and the agency can't reach them? Or if they simply don't bite on the referral? That makes us ineffective. All we can do is try to keep the door to us open."

When families are struggling with a number of basic needs, a voluntary program can only provide limited support. "I can think of an example of a mother who was referred to us from the hospital. They were worried about the mother's emotional condition, and about the development of the child. Eventually she developed a trusting relationship with us -- we admired the color of her child's eyes, all the things that made her proud to be that child's mother. We got her into vocational training, and to the displaced homemaker program across the hallway. Her living situation got better. But now she's pregnant again -- she just delivered, actually -- and she's quit school. The services aren't all in place. All we can do is try to keep her feeling good about herself and her child."

Staff Training, Qualifications, and Benefits

Although Community Education does not require certification, Lopez said she requires "certification in early childhood or elementary education or extensive experience. I have one person with a child-care certificate who doesn't have a college degree, but she doesn't teach."

Not only does Lopez require certification or experience, but the program has very specific staff needs that are hard to meet. Meyer commented on the dearth of people trained to work with two generations at once. When looking for teachers, she said, "We get names from the personnel department of people who have Early Childhood certification, but often we find they don't know anything about working with children and parents. It takes us longer to identify staff. I find so few people are sensitive both to child development issues and parenting issues. There's very little training available. We need new courses in universities."

When Meyer and Lopez find someone with the appropriate background, pay becomes an issue. "You do get higher pay if you are certified," said Meyer, "But because we don't have to have degrees in Community Education, we don't automatically have contracts. It takes a few years before we're working under contract, which is a significant difference: people are working without benefits, or holidays. But the trade-off is that people have an opportunity to work with an innovative, non-traditional program. We have a lot of autonomy and control. And we're so highly visible. That's real positive and works in our favor. Compared to other Community Education teachers, we get to do workshops and go to conferences."

In spite of these distinctions, said Lopez, "I have an opening right now, and I'm having a terrible time trying to fill it. Of course, I'm particular, but people are not always willing to work with no guarantees. We can only pay people at the part-time rate. No full-time teachers. You have no benefits, and no contract, and no job security because of the tenuous funding. This impedes attracting and retaining qualified people."

However, if anything, said Lopez, the precarious position of Amanda's Place has given the staff "real camaraderie. They're a team. They put their heart and soul into it -- it didn't exist before, and now it does because of them. They wouldn't leave, because they believe in it, but they do feel the stigma of being part-time. They feel it every month when they get their check."

Facilities

The original site of Amanda's Place, said Lopez, was "under the domain of the Off-Campus Program, so we went there, where we wouldn't need to pay for space."

"When we started," said Meyer, "the Pompano center had just been closed as a high school, and was reopened as a center entirely for adult and community education. Pompano was ideal when it was identified. We had our pick of ten empty buildings. We got a teacher lounge that we converted, lowering the ceiling, and so on. Then when demonstration grant money became available for the sibling class, I could expand to another classroom. The administration has been willing to make space available at the site."

When the program expanded to a second site, said Meyer, space was a little more difficult to come by. "The second site, Dillard, is a high school and a community school. It was hard to get space. There were a lot of hitches. We knew we didn't want borrowed space. We want to establish an atmosphere, not be a travelling show you set up an hour before. Finally, we got a triple-wide trailer and they let us put that on the campus of the high school. You need people willing to have us on the campus, and people have been one hundred percent cooperative."

That kind of cooperation has extended to the outreach sites, said Lopez. "We've had no difficulty finding outreach sites. One is in a Social Services center, one in a library, one in a hospital. All three wanted us, and invited us to open an Amanda's outreach at their sites."

Des Moines, Iowa

Community Education & Family Support and Education: "We in Community Education reflect the community's needs and wants. A lot of Community Education, I'll be frank with you, is typing at night. They serve those who can pay. We try to work with all segments of the community."

Charles Kilpatrick, Community Coordinator

Community Education in Iowa

In the 1970s, with the exception of four school districts, Community Education in Iowa took the form of Adult Education, which by law must run through local colleges. In 1976, when the state applied for, and received, a federal grant to hire a state consultant for Community Education, the grant was written by the Division of Adult Education.

According to Joseph Herrity, Director of the Iowa Center for Community Education, at the time of the original grant proposal, "The state superintendent decided that 'No, Community Education is a lot broader and touches a lot more issues.' He made the decision then that the position be housed where it would be in contact with the local school district." According to Herrity, that decision created a rift between Adult Education and Community Education that has just begun to close. In 1977, a task force on Community Education focused on the relationship between Adult Education and Community Education. Only in the last year, said Herrity, have the Adult Education deans and directors "realized that Community Education is not in the business of taking over Adult Education classes. They're beginning to understand that Community Education really enhances what they're doing. They can see that if they get referrals and visibility through Community Education they can generate more FTEs on the basis of that participation, and they can see how that benefits them."

The Iowa Community Education Act passed in 1978 with a provision for district levies. To levy for Community Education, districts must hold a one-time public referendum for Community Education, which has to pass by simple majority. In 1976, two school districts out of 433 had Community Education; in 1988, twenty-two districts had Community Education. Four programs have a levy of 1/2 mill; the rest run out of school district general operating funds. Legislation is currently before the state legislature that would make funds available, without a referendum, at the request of school boards. The legislature has appointed an interim school finance study committee that is considering making Community Education part of the core of K-12 funding.

The Community Education Act established the position of consultant at the Department of Public Instruction [now the Department of Education]. When federal funding for the Community Education office expired, the state superintendent took financial responsibility for the office, which continues to be financed through state revenue.

Herrity calls linkage one of the strengths of Community Education in Iowa. "In several towns, we've had Citizens' Planning Conferences, in which community leaders get together and identify four or five goals for their community, and we give them a year to do something about it. We have an inter-departmental Early Childhood Committee that's just started meeting. Everyone is doing something: the Home Economics people, the Vocational Educators, the people who work with the homeless."

Program Setting

Des Moines, the largest city in Iowa, is a financial and banking center; the Parent Growth Program (PGP) serves both a depressed area within the city and outlying rural communities. According to Liz Teufel, Instructor in the Parent Growth Program, "We're in the middle of a rural area, but we're also a big insurance area. Unfortunately, the kinds of jobs there are in insurance are not the kinds of jobs the students we work with are able to do. We have had a recent recovery, but we did have a lot of factory layoffs, and there are a couple more coming up. The people we work with are unskilled and semi-skilled labor, so they are the ones most likely to be affected. The ADC people are receiving is the same whether they're in a small town or in Des Moines. That makes better management skills crucial here.

"Being in an urban setting, we have a lot of resources that aren't available in the rural area. We get people coming to us from the rural areas. The Department of Human Services (DHS) provides the transportation. Another thing is that we're serving a large population, many of whom come from small towns. Maybe they are women whose husbands came to the city to get jobs, and then deserted them. These are people without support systems. We work a lot on support systems, on making people less isolated."

Program Goals

The goals of the PGP are: to enable parents to provide a nurturing, healthy environment for their children; to prevent child abuse and neglect; to provide an opportunity for parents to learn basic parenting, family management, and personal interaction skills; to develop parents' feelings of confidence and self-worth; and to give parents a chance to have contact with other parents who have similar concerns.

Program History

The Parent Growth Program began in 1977 as an outgrowth of the Community Home Economics Outreach Program, which was part of the Adult and Community Education Department of the Des Moines Public Schools. Teufel, who helped design the pilot of the Parent Growth Program, explained that the Community Home Economics Outreach was a "community program that had existed for seven years as part of Adult and Community Education. That program emphasized home visits and home economics programming in schools and community centers in low-income neighborhoods. Classes were organized to provide parent education for low-income, at-risk families. These evolved into the Parent Growth Program."

Program Characteristics

Services

Classes for parents of children birth to five meet twice a week for five hours with some time for parent/child interaction; classes for parents of elementary-age children and classes for mentally disabled parents meet once a week for five hours. PGP offers three ten-week sessions a year for parents of children birth to five; and two twelve-week sessions for special parents and parents of elementary-age children. The program also provides child care, transportation, health and dental screening, and outside speakers. The staff make home visits as needed, both for outreach and for education, to provide individual instruction, help students review material for tests, or focus on specific problems that are not appropriate to the center-based classes. For example, a parent with an autistic child receives some individualized home instruction. In the 1986-87 school year, staff members conducted 451 home visits to students.

Participants

In 1987, PGP served 99 parents of children birth to five; 19 retarded parents of children birth to three; 12 teen parents; and 24 parents of children in elementary school. Parents referred by DHS must meet

income guidelines; all parents served fell below a family income of $10,000/year. "Our minority enrollment," said Teufel, "parallels the demographics of the city."

Teufel explained that "almost all our people are referred by DHS and are low-income. The court referrals are not necessarily below the poverty line. They may have a job, but they are having some kind of trouble as parents."

Chuck Kilpatrick, Community Coordinator, North/Northwest Area of the Des Moines Public Schools, described the PGP as "the court of last resort -- we take the ones no-one else wants to handle. They're difficult and they have no money, and immediately, people back away from them."

PGP began by serving parents of children birth to five. In the past two years, it has begun to serve parents of elementary-age children and, as Kilpatrick noted, to address the problems of "the mentally retarded, who thirty years ago would have been institutionalized. They are now being mainstreamed and having children, and they have a real lack of knowledge about how to take care of them."

Over the years, said Teufel, "Our clientele has changed. We see more court-ordered people whose children are in foster care, more chemically dependent parents, more sexual abuse cases and more single men. The parents we're most successful with," she concluded, "are the ones who have an openness and willingness to learn and make changes."

Curriculum

The center-based curriculum for parents covers consumer education, food and nutrition, parent education, child development, play-learning, child abuse, health, home safety, pregnancy, birth control, home management, family living, adult relationships, communications skills, solving problems, resolving conflict, and resource management. The special parents' classes cover parent-child play for babies; infant growth and development; and safety and health.

Liz Teufel described the evolution of the curriculum: "We designed the program ourselves based on our experience and research. We developed a lot of the materials ourselves. We've just finalized the curriculum for the elementary parents and the special parents, because for the first year it was still evolving. We have to find a reality level and a reading level that are appropriate for our students. We find audio-visual materials that are cross-cultural and non-sexist.

"At first, some of our material was geared to the standard home economics class. For example, we started out teaching nutritious snacks to make for kids. Now we have a stronger emphasis on making a low-cost dinner when you think you have nothing at all on the shelves to make it with. As we worked with people, we pinpointed the real lack of information, and the real problems they have.

"Another thing that's changed is that we started by doing standard high-school level child development. I hand out charts on development, but I really just want the parents to be able to use them as a reference. I concentrate much more on interaction. I'm much more interested that they learn skills than facts.

"We have a basic curriculum, but we stress topics based on student needs. For example, we might have quite a few pregnant mothers, and we'd spend more time on prenatal care.

"The child care is somewhat more than babysitting. Most of the things we do are fairly simple. We give them stimulating things to do, such as coloring, pasting, and molding play dough. These are not items these children have had, particularly not the messy things, like finger paint. We also have motor and music activities. Our structure gets them used to a schedule, and to sharing and rule following."

Coordination with Public School Programs

Liz Teufel felt that PGP is "perceived positively by individuals in the system. We get referrals from counselors. For example, if there is pregnant girl who has dropped out, and they'd like to see her staying involved with the school system, they may refer her Parent Growth.

"We also work with mentally disabled students as a work/study site in cooperation with the high school. They work in our office, or in child care. We assess their skills in a job setting and teach basic employment skills. This provides a basic reference for teachers finding appropriate paid employment for those students."

Kilpatrick also pointed to the linkage of PGP with an alternative school located in the same building, called Metro. "Metro is where we take kids who have problems in the regular classroom and put them in a situation with a low student/teacher ratio. PGP works with some of these children -- they have a lot of early pregnancy and drug problems, and need a great deal of counseling. There might be a sixteen-year-old with a one-year-old baby. Sometimes she'll be enrolled in PGP, and we'll pick up the expenses."

Other school programs cooperating with PGP are the Preschool Special Education Program and Head Start.

Linkage to the Surrounding Community

The primary and constant linkage in the program is with the Department of Human Services (DHS), the principal funder and source of referrals. Teufel explained the way she and the other instructors work with DHS. "Since people are referred from DHS, they have social workers working in a case management capacity. We are informed of the worker's goals and objectives, and PGP is written into the DHS client case plan."

DHS came to the program's financial rescue during the funding crisis, and continues to support the program in a number of ways. For example, said Kilpatrick, "Just now, moving to a new location, we had to get a new approval for day care. Our monitor from DHS came out and looked at the site and gave us helpful information about what we'd have to do to pass the codes. That smoothed the way for us to make this move."

Linkage to other agencies is vital to the population PGP serves. Kilpatrick said simply, "We couldn't serve these people alone. Maybe you could serve the upper-income families alone. But the combined effort is necessary for us." The 1987 year-end report of the program listed fourteen community agencies to which students (parents) had been referred. PGP monitors the children in child care and makes referrals for early intervention in some health and developmental problems.

Turf issues have not arisen in these referrals. "We refer people into a program for parents of failure-to-thrive children. You might think we'd be in competition," said Teufel, "but they told us they love to get people who have attended our program, because they have such a firm foundation in parenting information."

PGP uses inservice to find out more about community agencies and to smooth the way for coordination. Teufel explained that "we schedule an inservice for ourselves whenever there's a new program in the community. Recently, the community started a CASA program -- Court Appointed Special Advocates -- and we scheduled reciprocal inservices with them."

Similarly, PGP staff give presentations to other community agencies and their clients. In 1986-87, a grant from the Greater Des Moines Child Abuse and Neglect Council allowed PGP staff to provide instruction and conduct activities for families in Parents Anonymous. In that year, ten agencies requested presentations by PGP staff. 200 people attended fourteen such meetings.

"Agency cooperation has extended to sharing of staff," said Teufel. "At one time, the Child Guidance Center provided a team teacher to us who came one day a week to do play learning. Guest speakers from several agencies come to describe services that parents and children can use."

Funding Sources

The funding of the Parent Growth Program is directly related to the history of Adult and Community Education in Des Moines. Since the 1930s, the city had had a levy of 1/2 mill for playground funds; in 1978, the Community Education legislation renamed that levy for Community Education, which currently accounts for 18 percent of the Community Education budget. At that time, the rest of the Community Education budget came out of school district general funds.

In 1981, a budget crunch cut state aid to schools for two successive years. At that point, said Dr. Denny, Director of the Des Moines Department of Adult and Community Education, "Our school board asked us to become self-sufficient." The Department of Adult and Community Education began that process, instituting fees for its programs, including: fee-supported parenting classes, like STEP; tuition-based school-age child care; and tuition-based pre-school and screening.

In 1985, the school district dropped all expenditures for Community and Adult Education from its budget. "When the crunch came and the school district dropped the Parent Growth Program from its budget," said Teufel, "DHS responded by making PGP a service they purchased." Since 1983, the Department of Human Services has funded the program, which continues to operate in the Department of Adult and Community Education. The 1987-88 budget of PGP was $155,310, including $36,710 in-kind from the schools.

Since DHS took over the funding of the program, Teufel explained, "Eligibility is determined by DHS. In the case of court-referred parents, DHS makes the formal referral to us, but the tuition for these parents comes from a separate county fund." Additional funding comes from the Department of Public Instruction through a Depressed Area Home Economics Grant. PGP has obtained grants for specific purposes as needed. According to Charles Kilpatrick, "We're also supported by the Department of Education, and Polk County Juvenile Court."

Lessons from this Site

The Need for Personal Outreach

To recruit the population PGP serves, personal contact is essential. "First we make personal contact through the home visits," said Teufel. "People feel more comfortable becoming part of a group after they've had that interaction. In the first home visit, we give information, and build a rapport, letting them know what's going to happen. Some are excited, others will tell us they're not eager to attend, or they're nervous. We let them know what to expect. During class sessions, we'll make two or three home visits to a family. Home visits vary widely, based on individual needs."

Expect Attrition from High-Risk Participants

The population that comes to PGP continues to have compound problems even after joining the program. The drop-out rate, said Teufel, is about one-third. "Some become unavailable. A lot of things come up, very often health problems for them or their family. We had a woman who had a urinary tract infection

and had to be hospitalized. They live in dangerous places. One woman fell through the steps in her building. The steps were rotted, and she fell one story. Another woman was in a coma because she was beaten up near the place where she lived. A lot of the children are hospitalized with asthma, ear infections, and pneumonia. Or there might be problems with a boyfriend or a girlfriend. A woman might not come because she's been beaten up, or she's ashamed because her boyfriend left her. Some just can't keep their lives organized. We do a home visit, talk about the problem, and encourage them to continue attending."

Surviving a Funding Crisis

"Since the funding crunch," said Teufel, "Community and Adult Education needs to be conscious of being self-supporting. Currently the school district has to put an emphasis on K-12 and can't take K-12 money to serve adults."

If a local Community Education program has to depend on fees to survive, but nevertheless wishes to serve the whole community, it must find alternative arrangements for funding. In this case, the Department of Human Services had a stake in seeing the program continue to be available to its clients: the PGP got a high rating from DHS staff, and was cost-effective. "Without our services," said Kilpatrick, "Human Services probably wouldn't be able to reach as many people. For the dollars they spend, they get one of the largest institutions in the city with all of its staff and resources. It was also a question of facilities. Rental in the Des Moines area would double their costs. We absorb the facilities. By combining forces we have the least amount of costs while using professionals who have about fifteen, sixteen years' experience."

Nevertheless, this a costly population to reach and serve. These parents need basic services simply to be able to attend. Teufel explained: "We provide transportation within the school district and some people can bring themselves. DHS provides out-of-district transportation." Kilpatrick observed that "Transportation is always a problem, and you need a lot of counseling and linkage so that they are willing to come out and feel comfortable with you. And you need to provide day care. If you don't have the essentials, they just won't attend. These aren't the typical individuals. Their problems are compound. It's very expensive: transportation, the intensity of the teaching, meeting in such small groups."

Kilpatrick observed that the principal limits on the growth of the program are "the instructors' time and funding." In 1987, the supervisor of the program was reassigned, and the bulk of the administrative work fell to the teaching staff. Recruiting takes a series of time consuming home visits. The program also requires paperwork. Teufel explained, "We keep daily records of major observations. We report to DHS on attendance, competency attainment, their gain of factual information and their interaction with their children." Teufel indicated that in the future PGP will probably "have to cut one professional position due to funding cuts and increased costs."

Education vs. Social Service

When the budget crisis came, said Dr. Denny, "The superintendent said to me, 'That's not Community Education, that's welfare.' So we asked DHS to pick up the tab, and they did." Perhaps in light of this querying on the part of the district, Kilpatrick characterized the program this way: "What we're doing is not counseling. We're using education of mothers and children to help them be able to handle their families and be able to cope. It's just one example of how education can change a family -- education can change the whole family. I think DHS chose the education setting because they were tied up with so many clients they just didn't have time to sit down and educate a group of people. Our people are educators with years of training and experience." The program staff work to maintain strong links to the school. "We make it a point to cooperate with the school district," said Teufel, "and balance our budget. We have strong school board support. PGP provides a link between the school and the at-risk population."

PGP has come up with some creative "blending of service," with other parts of the district, including providing a work/study site for mentally disabled high school students. However, said Teufel, "the greatest resource provided to the district by our program is increased parent skill which can result in children who can better function as students." The nature of that contribution may not be fully understood or appreciated by school personnel. Kilpatrick commented that "We have to work more on educating the schools on what we're doing. That's one of our goals. If you're in K-12, your major concern is your students. When you learn that our program benefits you, you get interested."

Teufel saw the educational setting as a distinct advantage to families used to dealing with social service agencies. "The system confuses them, and we're advocates and interpreters of the system. We work hard to get the families to communicate better with their social workers. The students like it that we're teachers. Because we're housed in a school, they take classes very seriously. Prior school failure makes completion of our classes a special source of pride."

Placement outside the social-service system may be an advantage when it comes to referrals and follow-up. According to Teufel, "Once people have had success with PGP, they're more willing to try working with other agencies. We facilitate students' follow-up on recommendations made by their case workers. For example, someone might say, 'I can't get a refrigerator,' and when we talk to the social worker, it turns out she just needs to call the number the social worker gave her. Maybe she just needs one more person to ask, 'Have you called yet?' Sometimes we'll walk them to the phone and say, 'Here's the number, it's time to call.' However, as adults, ultimately they decide what they're going to do and what they're not going to do."

"Unique" Within the School System

Teufel indicated that the PGP is unique, both within Community Education, and within the school system as a whole. "Community Education is a separate department, and we are a program within the department. We do administrative tasks and are housed away from Community Education offices. We're the only full-time teaching staff in Community Education. This makes it necessary to establish direct, clear lines of communication with several departments in the district."

Being a public school employee gives the staff a certain amount of security, but only if they are certified. Of the three full-time staff, said Teufel, "One person is a family living specialist with a background in counseling, and the certificate wasn't required for her. Only certified personnel have seniority in the district."

Space Constraints

In the past, Community Education has made use of many closed buildings in Des Moines. "For example," said Kilpatrick, "we've turned one closed building into a day-care center. The day care is for employees of the district, then we have a pre-school that's open to the community, and a Focus program in connection with a hospital in which special counselors develop activities to mainstream kids and help them overcome difficulties."

Nevertheless, PGP has had to share space, and has had to move from one space to another, most recently this summer. According to Teufel, "In our district, the population is getting smaller, but the elementary age population is getting larger." In addition, said Kilpatrick, the district "closed an entire school, which crunched everybody. We're all in competition for space. It's easy to expand; it's very hard to contract. We've finally solved the problem in the last few days. We're next to the hospital, which should make things easier, and we're right next to the inner city. We used to be a couple of miles away."

"While available classrooms are at a premium in the district," said Teufel, "PGP has been assigned space at the Alternative High School. One advantage might be that we can combine our child care with child care for the alternative high school, which would mean there would be a full-time early educator working with the children. That would be a real boon to our program."

Advantages to Location in Community Education

According to Kilpatrick, the placement in Community and Adult Education also means that "We can take a person in PGP through a multitude of programs -- vocational, and so on. I'm in tune with jobs in the mainstream -- I just got a call from American Mutual that they're looking for someone who can type 65 words per minute, that kind of thing."

Teufel agreed. "ABE and GED are in the same building. Sometimes we take people by the hand and show them the room and the people, and they sign themselves up. Being in a school gives us a support system -- we can call the school nurse, for example, if we have a medical question. And there's a financial advantage: Vocational Home Economics moneys are only available to programs in an educational setting."

Personal Linkages

Linkage is essential and constant when working with this population. According to Kilpatrick, "The linkages tend to be informal. That may be a flaw in the structure, because if someone leaves or retires, so much of the relationship and the support has been interpersonal. I've had the experience of seeing key people leaving being incredibly detrimental. You can go from tremendous support to zero." The 1987 year-end report of PGP cites the problem of "rapidly changing staffs at the agencies which refer to the Parent Growth Program." In response, the report continues, "We intend to do periodic informational updates with these staffs this year."

Tailored Curricula

Teufel indicated the process of frequent evaluation by which the PGP curricula came into being. With this population, she said, reading and reality levels are critical. PGP has gone through a similar process in designing an evaluation. "Iowa State helped develop a lengthy evaluation form, but the instrument was more sophisticated than the students. Student tests were adapted to be more realistic for our students and were put into simpler language."

Muskegon, Michigan

Community Education & Family Support and Education: "If we indeed believe Community Education is to serve the community, and you have people in the community who, by their own admission or the court's or caseworker's admission, are not good parents, then our job is to help them take the step to being more competent parents or to make the decision that they are not able to take care of their children."

Patrick Shafer, Director of Community Education

Community Education in Michigan

Michigan has been the national leader in Community Education since the 1930s, when Frank Manley, a physical education director in the Flint City Schools, approached the industrialist Charles Stewart Mott with the idea of using a recreation program in the schools to prevent juvenile delinquency. The program in Flint became a national model, encompassing activities for the entire community, including literacy and high-school completion for adults.

In 1969, Michigan became the first state to provide state financing for Community Schools. The current appropriation is $3,000,000 for directors' salaries. The amount per director is based on student participation hours; the ceiling is $15,000, the average about $7,000 to $8,000. Other sources of funding are high-school completion funds and school district operating funds.

"Over the years," said Dan Cady, Director of Programs and Services for the Flint Community Schools, "the link between Community Education and Adult Education has been very strong." Surplus Adult Education funds are available to Community Education. According to Cady, Community Education in Michigan has relied on high-school completion funds, which have no cap on state aid, for a major source of revenue. "In the past few years, though, there has been a movement to expand the function of Community Education to look at other community problems, and to link up with other agencies to do that. Community Education has tended to assume responsibility in the area of pre-school and child-care programs." Michigan currently spends $20,000,000 per year on programs for at-risk preschool children. The state is in the process of surveying parent education and family support programs across Michigan; state plans for the future include reorganizing its delivery of family services and, possibly, a new family agency on the state level.

Program Setting

Nancy Miller, Director of the Parent/Child Workshop, explained that "Muskegon is on the opposite side of the state from Detroit, but our industries are tied to the automobile industry. We have a lot of displaced workers. We're a beautiful tourist area, but it's also industrial. Muskegon is one of the few lone depressed blue collar areas on the western side of the state. As our culture and lifestyle become more technological, it becomes harder and harder for the low-functioning, poorly educated person to find work."

Program History

From its inception in 1980, the Parent/Child Workshop has been a collaborative program between Community Education and the Department of Social Services (DSS) to serve DSS clients. "The Department of Social Services," said Patrick Shafer, Director of Community Education at Orchard View Schools, "asked us whether we would want to apply for a grant to run a parenting program."

Miller explained that they "had worked with the Department of Social Services before, offering a job-training program for their clients. They liked the way we fulfilled contracts -- we did what we said we would do -- and they worked well with our administration. They also liked our attitude: we have a high respect for the student as an adult learner. We were already teaching a high school completion class in parenting, and some of the students were clients of the Department of Social Services. Their service workers liked the changes they saw in those people.

"The Department of Social Services came to us and said, 'If money were no object, set up the ideal program.' At that time, no programs were available in Western Michigan at the time that dealt with the total family. We wrote the concept in May, but didn't hear anything. We didn't think it would go any further. Then in August, they called to say they wanted us to do it. I don't think at first I understood how seriously involved the program would become."

Shafer, too, was stunned by the scope of the need. "We never thought the program would be this large. Muskegon is a large county, but we had no concept of the problem. It's an unending thing. It is so sad, but the kids are likely to become what their parents were. We could have our own referral system forever. But we have helped families become able to live together. We even have staff members who came from the program."

Program Goals

The goals of the Parent/Child Workshop are to change dysfunctional patterns of parenting and reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect by building parents' knowledge and awareness of their own needs and their childrens' needs. The Parent/Child Workshop seeks to: foster self-esteem; provide information about child development; teach parents basic skills of care, behavior management, and communication; model appropriate behavior; and provide information and access to community resources.

The Parent/Child Workshop teaches child development through hands-on experience. Nancy Miller outlined her philosophy of the program: "My whole background was in early childhood education. I knew that you must have hands-on experience to make what you learn real. I've been involved in public education since 1960, and I have a very strong belief that if you have low self-esteem, learning is more difficult, healthy self-esteem can't be passed on to the to your child. We affirm the idea that if you try your best, you can make changes. We build on students' strengths."

Program Characteristics

Services

The Parent/Child Workshop has several components, all free of charge. The center-based portion of the Workshop operates throughout the year. Classes meet twelve hours per week in eight-week sessions. Infants, toddlers, and preschoolers take part in age-appropriate programs on site. Parents spend a part of each class day in monitored, structured interaction with their children. One morning a week, resource people from the community share their knowledge with parents; that afternoon, parents participate in recreational activities and tours of community resources. The Workshop provides a home-visitor component and transportation.

In addition to the center-based program, the Parent/Child Workshop has a Homebound program for families with newborns or children with special needs. Nancy Miller explained that the Homebound teacher "was added in the third year of the program. At the time, we were receiving referrals from Butterworth Hospital in Grand Rapids, which has a neo-natal intensive care unit, and we had babies on monitors in our nurseries. As we saw more and more infants with special needs, we realized it wasn't appropriate to have them in the center-based program. So we started the Homebound program, and it expanded rapidly." Homebound teachers meet with families one and a half hours a week, and facilitate the transition when the family is ready to enter the center-based program.

The Department of Social Services has significantly influenced the structure of the Parent/Child Workshop, requesting both the Parent Aide Program and the Nurturing Program for foster parents. The Parent Aide Program matches a trained volunteer with a family referred by DSS. Parent Aides make home visits and consult with families by telephone. The Parent Nurturing Program provides parent education and training to licensed foster parents.

Support Services for Children is a research project of the Michigan Department of Mental Health and serves elementary-age children of disordered adults in an afterschool program. The Workshop also offers a summer program for school-age children.

Participants

The center-based portion of the workshop serves approximately 100 families in each eight-week session. Sessions are open to any resident of the county. According to Miller, "Seventy-five per cent of the families have been referred to us ***at some time***." In addition to the Department of Social Services, referrals regularly come from twelve county agencies and several physicians. A regional hospital with a neo-natal intensive care unit refers families to the Homebound program. In 1986-87, the Homebound Program served seventy-six parents in 446 visits and 126 telephone contacts. Families with children in out-of-home placement also participate in the Parent/Child Workshop; parents and children come together in the center.

The Parent/Child Workshop places brochures in the client areas of all its referring agencies. In other Community Education activities at Orchard View, thirty-nine per cent of students learn about the program through brochures. In the case of the Parent/Child Workshop, "You have to do more intense outreach," said Shafer. "The typical participant is sitting inside the house on a sunny day with the curtains drawn and the television on. They don't want to deal with the world, so we must go door to door. Outreach is our salvation; we have two people recruiting year 'round."

Nancy Miller observed that it may take the family "eight to ten weeks to become comfortable with the program. If the family isn't coming to class, the home visitor will contact them. If they still don't come, we will go back to the referring person to see if there is still a problem. We deal with a lot of impulsive behavior. The family may not live in the same house two months in a row. It can be difficult to maintain contact with families."

Miller said that the program has had the best results with the "motivated parent -- one who wants to be a good parent but perhaps had no models in childhood. The intellectually limited parent has some success but inevitably will return to the program as the children go through each new stage of development. The challenge of working with the retarded parent is that these parents have difficulty generalizing the concepts they learn and applying them to day-to-day parenting."

According to Miller, "Parents with substance abuse problems are challenges both to the courts and to the Parent/Child Workshop. Because of the use of alcohol or drugs, they just can't be consistent parents. These parents are quick to learn that if we suspect substance abuse, we will sent them home. Our euphemism is, 'You're not yourself today, why don't you go home?' We avoid accusation."

Curriculum

Nancy Miller explained that while "We do use some commercially prepared curricula, we modify and build on their ideas. Our core is always the same: to build self-esteem and teach child growth and development, but our have broad guidelines and no set curriculum. Our staff consists of many creative, innovative people, who can address the needs of the students in each eight-week session. There are many

resources at our disposal. Our staff members share ideas and keep excellent records of ideas and materials that work well.

Coordination with Public School Programs

Nancy Miller explained that "our one direct link with the public schools is through the new Michigan Health Curriculum. In our research group we're using the problem-solving component with the children in an intensive way, and that will be carried along in their K-12 years."

Teen parents participate in the program only in the summer because, as Miller explained, "They are in high school, or in an alternative program during the year. We need special permission to work with them on site during the school year." Shafer explained that "in Michigan, you get state money based on your count, which can make schools hesitant to give up a student."

Linkage to the Surrounding Community

The Parent/Child Workshop cooperates with other agencies on several levels. Many agencies provide resource speakers for classes. "Some things we might have done ourselves when the program was smaller," said Miller, "we now do through networking. Our nurses still teach personal hygiene and facts about communicable diseases, outside agencies come in to discuss other aspects of available community resources."

The staff of the Parent/Child Workshop regularly refers families to agencies in the community. "Most of our staff members," said Miller, "serve on other community agencies, and ensure that our people receive the appropriate services." In addition to making referrals to other agencies, Miller explained that "Workshop staff provide input to a multi-disciplinary team which sets goals for the treatment of families with persistent problems."

"One way that we maintain visibility with all the agencies," said Miller, "is through our monthly newsletter, which we distribute to all the agencies and many doctors' offices throughout the county."

This kind of effort is critical. "We have no other choice but to work in this community approach," said Shafer. "Otherwise, our program would not have survived."

The Parent/Child Workshop cooperates with a number of agencies at the program level. "We co-manage the Support Services for Children program with the Department of Mental Health," Miller explained. "The parents are clients of County Mental Health, and the child is working with the Parent/Child Workshop. County Mental Health provides a therapist to the center-based program who assists in crisis intervention.

"The Muskegon County Health Department provides child immunizations once every eight to ten weeks. In the summer, they provide their substance-abuse prevention program, called Project Charlie, to our school-age children."

Several agencies have come to the aid of the program at times of need. Initially, the bus system did not reach the Workshop, making it difficult for some families to attend. "After a year of deliberation," said Shafer, "the public transportation system changed its bus route to include stops at the door of the Parent/Child Workshop. This was accomplished through the help of the deputy director of the local Department of Social Services and the township officials."

Funding Sources

The Department of Social Services has funded the program from the outset. The 1987-88 budget for the Parent/Child Workshop was $347,300, of which $73,000 came from DSS. In addition to DSS, the program receives funds and/or consultative services from Community Mental Health, Child and Family Services, the Muskegon County Health Department, and private foundations. The program may receive state aid for students who do not hold a high school diploma.

Shafer cited one practical disadvantage to the multiple sources of funding: "The staff spend many hours in writing and documenting each session."

Miller pointed to two components that are both expensive and unusual in Community Education. The first was "having the children on site, which is very expensive and sets us apart from the rest of Community Education. We're not just babysitting. We view the family as a system, and everyone needs to be involved for the family to become healthy. Transportation is also expensive, and unique to the Parent/Child Workshop."

Shafer agreed that the program is very expensive, but adds that "whenever I spend time with the staff of the Parent/Child Workshop and their many, many students, I realize that every penny is justified."

Lessons from this Site

A Strong Community Education State

The history and prominence of Community Education in Michigan puts Community Education directors in an unusual position. Shafer laid out the differences: "Many Community Education directors work directly for the superintendent of schools; they do not report to a Recreation Director or a principal. Because of this line of authority, Community Education serves as an umbrella to its many programs and funding sources, which is a definite advantage to the Parent/Child Workshop. For example, if we find that one of our parents has a problem with math and money management, we can help that person enroll in our Adult Basic Education classes. If a parent is working toward a high school diploma, he or she can earn credit for attending the Parent/Child Workshop. This is an advantage to us, because we can earn state funding for these people who do not have a high school diploma."

"Our teachers don't have to worry about money," said Miller, because they know that the funding is going to come from somewhere. The teachers are free to concentrate on being creative and helping the families."

A Chance for Positive Contact with the Schools

For parents, the school setting can be an initial disadvantage. "Our parents," said Miller, "bring with them their experiences in high school, as young people. For our families, school is a scary place: are they coming to learn or being sentenced for treatment? We let them know there are no exams, no reading in front of a group. We do 'buzz groups,' and make one person the secretary, so if the others can't read or write they don't have to. Anyone who can't read will be paired with someone who can."

Once parents become comfortable, the school setting can become an advantage. Positive association with the Parent/Child Workshop can lead to further involvement with the schools. "We find that if they're not held up to ridicule with us, they become much more confident about ABE or attempting the GED. They may have gotten pregnant in their junior or even their senior year, with only a few credits to go. The motto of Community Education is 'You Can,' and we give them the feeling that yes, they really can."

The staff members actively encourage parents to take advantage of other educational opportunities. "We try to do minimum screening and counsel people," said Miller. "The ABE staff present to our people all the programs available to them."

"If someone doesn't know how to read," said Shafer, "we'll refer them to their home district for Adult Basic Education, or we will place them part-time in our Basic Education component for reading. We will help Workshop participants with vocational rehabilitation, job placement, or any other Community Education service."

Treading Lightly in the Schools

"If we were to say we had one problem as Community Education," said Shafer, "it would be the fact that our budget is more flexible than the budgets of the principals in the district. We have had trouble with this at times, because we can be very creative with our money, whereas the principals are somewhat limited in what they can do."

Not only does Community Education have to be careful within the school system, but the Parent/Child Workshop has to be careful within its host building. Shafer explained that when the Parent/Child Workshop began in 1979-80, "An entire wing of our middle-school building was empty -- an ideal place to begin an new program." However, Miller added, "We've been here eight years, and we still behave as guests in their building. We work hard to keep their middle-school students separate from our adults. Our students even use doors other than the ones used by middle-school students." In attempt to keep things running smoothly, Miller makes a point of donating in-kind services of her staff to other areas of the school. "We also share our equipment, including three vans used to transport our students. When those vans are not in use, they're available to any program in the district."

The delicate position of Community Education and the Parent/Child Workshop become apparent when they have to compete for space with other school programs. "Space is starting to be a problem," said Shafer. "With the baby bulge we're experiencing, we're beginning to feel crowded in the classrooms we now have."

Transportation

"Transportation," said Miller, "was a problem from the beginning. The nearest stop of the public bus system was a mile away from our building. The first year we had morning and afternoon classes, and between classes, I drove my family station wagon to the bus and picked up students. I also picked people up on my way into school from my home."

The first step toward improving the situation was a lengthy negotiation to get the bus route changed to include a stop at the building that housed the Workshop. Later, the Workshop purchased three fifteen-passenger vans to transport students from outlying areas of the county beyond the reach of the bus line. A driver and an outreach worker staff each van. The Workshop uses travel time for educational purposes. "We always model appropriate behavior," said Miller, "and that includes appropriate management of children in a vehicle as well as appropriate play activities. The outreach worker also helps the parents manage their morning routine."

The Need for A Tailored Curriculum

Miller explained that the Parent/Child Workshop uses the general ideas of some published curricula, but that families in crisis "need programs and materials addressed specifically to fit their needs." Teachers regularly assess curriculum materials for content, reading level, and appropriateness to the socio-economic

levels of the parents. Once a year, teachers assess parents' reading levels and adjust the curriculum accordingly. "With non-readers," said Miller, "we do a lot of role play in place of written materials. We've discovered that many of our financially disadvantaged families don't have a lot of toys and games at home. They didn't have many chances for tactile activity. The parents were taking fun projects that their children had started and were doing them themselves! So now we plan a lot of craft projects for the family that supplement the concepts we cover in that day's class lesson."

Personal Linkages

"This program wouldn't have survived," said Miller, "if we didn't work closely with other agencies." These linkages are often personal; staff members serve on the boards of other agencies. The Parent/Child Workshop works hard to keep a high profile at other agencies. For example, said Miller, "We have someone from our staff at the Department of Social Services every Wednesday morning with an open appointment schedule."

"We have to make sure new people at each agency know who we are," said Miller. "With the kind of agencies we work with, personnel come and go. It's a high burnout rate. We have maintained an excellent rapport with the agencies with whom we work. The only stumbling block we may run into would be a personality conflict between an agency's worker and ours, or miscommunication between their staff and ours."

Staff Training, Benefits, and Burnout

The staff of the Parent/Child Workshop are Community Education employees. "We're not on the same scale as contracted public-school teachers," Shafer explained. "Our teachers are non-contract and non-union, but we lack the standardization which sometimes comes with unionization, so our teachers can do home visiting and extensive follow-up work. Generally, they do whatever needs to be done to help the families."

Even without a contract, Miller said she has not had trouble finding qualified staff. The issue is less one of scale or benefits than appropriate training. "I try to make sure applicants know what we are and what we do, because there's nothing really like our program for them to have any equivalent experience. In prospective teachers, I look for successful parents, a strong background in child development, and experiences in non-traditional settings. I rely on staff people in each content area to assess applicants; and when an applicant is hired, he or she is assigned a mentor." To address one aspect of the program that may be new to applicants, she said, "We also offer an inservice for our teachers on court testimony and proper gathering of data to be used in court."

Working with dysfunctional families can be exhausting. Miller explained that the structure of the program reflects the staff's needs. "I would never recommend more than an eight-week session. We have two weeks between sessions -- one for reporting, writing, and planning; the other for healing, renewing, restoring, and refreshing. The Parent/Child Workshop sets aside a portion of its monies for teachers and paraprofessionals to attend conferences and workshops generally offered throughout the state. These workshops give staff members an opportunity to gain new ideas and information to deal better with the pressures and challenges of working in this kind of program. One of the tasks of the coordinator of the program is to help the teachers and paraprofessionals value the small gains made by the parents and to help them know that many of these families are simply unable to make great changes in their lives."

Form Follows Funding

The Department of Social Services has requested many of the components that make up the Parent/Child Workshop, but other funders have also affected the program's structure. "We do not want to hold classes in the evenings," said Miller, "which makes it difficult for working parents to attend. But in order to meet state requirements for Adult Basic Education funding, we have to meet in three-hour time blocks. In order to meet those requirements and meet in the evening, the classes would run too late in the evening for the children."

Becoming Part of the System

"What happens to the family," said Miller, "is ultimately out of our control. The determination occurs at other agencies. We do, however, contribute information to those agencies. We see the whole family together; the worker doesn't see the whole family together. The pain of working with this type of family is that the system can contribute to the emotional instability of the child. Sometimes children are put back with their families before they are ready, or we try one more time when we really shouldn't. Then the family is disrupted again; and, as the years go by, the child becomes more and more difficult to handle, maybe unadoptable.

"There's no answer, no easy solution to a family that is too damaged. We want to make sure we're really helping them, and not just adding to the hardships and stresses of their everyday lives."

Eureka, Missouri

Community Education & Family Support and Education: "It seems to me a natural fit. We talk about life-long learning. Well, working with parents from their pregnancy onward is really life-long learning."

Dr. Vincent Vento, Assistant Superintendent
for Community Education

Community Education in Missouri

In 1972, when the Mott Foundation established the Midwest Community Education Development Center in Missouri, only one or two districts in the state had Community Education programs. Dr. Everette Nance came to the Center with seed money from the Mott Foundation to help school districts start Community Education programs.

Missouri ranks among the five lowest states in the country in per capita spending, and ranks below the national average in spending for education. According to Nance, the Missouri legislature is extremely resistant to any kind of categorical funding. Local Community Education programs receive no state support. State legislation allows for levies, but Nance does not know of any district currently levying for Community Education. This means that nothing happens in Community Education unless the local community demonstrates its support in the form of fees. Nance observed that the need for local funding produces an impressive range of programming that is responsive to the local community. But, as Dr. Vento, Assistant Superintendent for Community Education at the Rockwood County Schools, observed, "Maybe if we had funding, it would encourage more people to get behind the Community Education concept."

Missouri is a rural state, with many small school districts whose limited resources mean they cannot afford a Community Education program. The individual districts also tend to remain independent of one another. The state Community Education Association is primarily a professional association and at this time does not lobby to promote Community Education or statewide funding. Today, said Nance, 170 out of the 492 school districts have Community Education. In 1988, the State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education established a full-time position in Community Education.

Program Setting

Rockwood is a suburban district west of St. Louis, one of the largest districts in the state, covering 150 square miles, including many parks. According to Dr. Vento, "The demographics are such that it's really like three districts in one. You almost have to program in triplicate, or at least in duplicate. Scheduling is difficult. You just can't schedule one site to serve the whole district."

Rockwood is growing, and space in the schools is at a premium. Although the community has just passed a twenty-million-dollar bond issue to build four new elementary schools, the amount of space currently available limits the growth of parent education programs. "The parents have expressed an interest in having an Early Childhood Center where parents just drop in, but we don't have the space for it," said Louise Nelson, the Early Childhood Coordinator. Most classes are held at night; for daytime classes Nelson has had to find donated space from libraries, churches, and hospitals.

Program Goals

The local program shares the goals of PAT statewide, which are: to identify conditions that might interfere with normal learning so that no child reaches the age of three with an undetected handicap; help

parents provide a home environment that is conducive to aiding the child's physical, intellectual, and social development; and demonstrate the feasibility of a home/school partnership.

Program History

The Rockwood School District has been offering pre-school education for fourteen years. "I'd always felt pre-school was necessary," said Dr. Vento, "and that learning didn't begin in kindergarten, but I didn't have the time or expertise to implement it. So when someone came to me and said she wanted to do a pre-school, I was very excited. We checked pre-schools in the area and found there was a waiting list, so there was clearly a need. We started in the southern part of the district, and then once people in the north heard about it, they wanted it too. We were also doing child care long before the issue became big as it is today, before it became political."

The pre-school supervisor was a part-time staff member of Community Education, responsible for several hundred children. The pre-school always included some parent involvement. In 1984, Missouri's Early Childhood Development Act passed, mandating all school districts to provide PAT services or contract with another district or public agency to do so. According to Mildred Winter, director of PAT statewide, Rockwood was the only district to place the services in Community Education. At the time, Dr. Vento went to his supervisor and "presented a rationale for the program to go in Community Education. He's a strong Community Education person, too, and had the same thoughts." With the addition of PAT, the position of Early Childhood Coordinator became full-time.

Program Characteristics

Services

The PAT legislation mandates parent education in the form of four home visits and four group sessions for parents a year and developmental screening for the child; in the future, it will include parent education for the parents of developmentally delayed children. In addition to PAT, Rockwood Community Education offers an array of parent-education and parent/child classes, and the tuition-based pre-school.

The geography and demographics of the Rockwood School District affected the structure of the PAT program. "Parents had difficulty attending the workshops because of the location," said Louise Nelson. "We found we have to have meetings in more than one location, because people don't like to cross those psychological borders." According to Nelson, another distinctive feature of PAT in Rockwood that may be "uniquely suburban is that we've added more tuition-based classes at the parents' request. The moms here are looking for things to do. They wanted more support than we were able to offer through state funding."

Initially, Nelson offered babysitting during the workshops, but had to drop that service because of the facilities. "We had kids in cafeterias, music rooms, all kinds of spaces that were not appropriate. We needed rooms with carpets and bare walls. That does constrain us. Some families can't come if they can't bring their kids. To encourage full participation, we're now offering parent/child classes."

Participants

Any parent with a child between birth and three years of age who resides in the school district is eligible for PAT's home visits and workshops. Children receive screening up to kindergarten entry, and workshops now cover parents of children up to five. In 1987-88, 1,000 parents and children received some form of PAT services.

Louise Nelson has developed a PAT brochure that goes out to all hospitals in the district. She also sends a letter to all new parents in the district inviting them to participate, and an Early Childhood

newsletter that goes out to all known eligible families in the district. Parents hear of PAT and the other parent-education services through the district-wide Community Education brochure. Nelson observed, "The population who read the material take no effort to reach. They're interested. They find us."

As the emphasis on printed material indicates, Nelson feels that the "type of families we're reaching most effectively are the ones where the mother stays home, the ones who read the material we send out." They are literate, and relatively affluent. An estimated fifty-nine per cent of the families participating in PAT or parent-education classes in Rockwood have incomes above $35,000.

The groups Nelson feels she is least effective in reaching are the teen parent population and low-income parents. Dr. Vento observes that "large urban areas have more at-risk kids than we do here," but he acknowledges that "we do have at-risk kids, and we're trying to reach those kids." Both Nelson and Dr. Vento felt they were not reaching as many of these at-risk families as they would like.

Nelson expressed frustration with her experience of using other social-service agencies to locate families. "I think this kind of recruiting requires personal contact, being there. Otherwise, they just don't know me, I'm just a name they've been given by another agency. The most effective method is word of mouth. We try to get names from families who are already in the program and trust us. Then the parent educator will visit once or twice, just to talk, before they're even in the program."

Nelson recently applied for, and received, a grant from the Department of Education to reach teen parents. "These grants are based on enrollment levels, so they are non-competitive: every district could get one. We are supposed to target one high-risk population in the district that we're not reaching, so I targeted teen parents. Teens have special needs, and I have a social worker on my staff who's worked with teens, and I'd like to utilize her skills. And other districts have already worked with teen parents and written up their work, so we didn't have to reinvent the wheel. Models already existed."

Curriculum

For the home visits, Nelson uses the standard state-wide PAT curriculum, which is drawn from Burton White's The First Three Years of Life, and enriches it with materials based on parents' interests. "We've added material on issues White didn't address that are needs of the family, like toilet training, sleep problems and child management."

Louise Nelson changed the format of the parent group meetings in response to parents' requests. Instead of doing a one-night workshop on discipline, for example, she created a two-week series. "The first night they get a lot of theory and homework; then at the second meeting they come back with real-life situations to discuss." Although she continues to use the mandated topics, she has found them "not spicy enough" to draw parents in, and is reducing the number of those offerings in favor of more outside speakers. "Parents also just need a chance to hear other parents talk and find out that they're all going through the same things."

Coordination with Public School Programs

Nelson commented that "due to its newness, PAT does not yet have continuity and integration with other programs like elementary education." This lack of formal coordination with the K-12 program makes it difficult for PAT to reach teen parents, for example, "Because we don't yet have the strong relationship with the junior high schools and the high schools that we need to make that possible. I have been invited to speak to principals about PAT during their monthly meetings."

As the one full-time person on the PAT staff, Nelson handles most of the program's administration. Time constraints make it difficult for her to establish all the community linkages she would like, and she and Dr. Vento have discussed the possibility of "having one person on the staff to establish links with other agencies." Nevertheless, PAT does currently maintain linkages with several other community agencies, primarily exchanging referrals with several hospitals and with the St. Louis County Child Mental Health Agency. As part of its outreach program, Child Mental Health also cooperates with PAT by providing a therapist who sees parents and does a monthly inservice for PAT staff.

PAT staff make referrals to other agencies and counselors "all the time," said Nelson. "If we have a concern, we try to make it the parent's concern as well. Often parents pursue the help they need because of us. We serve as a link, a resource. My feeling is the parent educator's role should be to focus on parent education and support, not counseling." The parent educators have come up with a list of resources in the area "so that parents don't have to travel a hundred miles to get something they need. The list includes places to get evaluation, counselors, support groups for specific needs. We ask parents for their feelings about the referrals and make note of that on the list."

PAT has built on existing relationships between Community Education and other community organizations. When PAT began the screening component, the program didn't have space it needed within the school facilities. However, Community Education had a pre-existing relationship with a local hospital, using their facilities for adult classes on health-related topics and, through the Partners in Education program, bringing hospital staff into the K-12 classrooms. "When PAT came aboard," said Dr. Vento, "we said, 'We need help,' and they responded." The hospital provided space for screening in its satellite center, which is located in the center of the district. Community Education recently gave the hospital an award for this partnership.

Funding Sources

School districts receive reimbursement for PAT according to a calculation based on participation levels. The legislation allocates funds on the basis of eligibility, but final reimbursements use actual participation figures. In the first year, PAT covered up to ten percent of the eligible families in each district; in the second year, up to twenty percent; in the third year, up to thirty percent. In 1987-88, the rate was thirty-five percent, and by FY 1988, the allocations covered services and screenings for children through age four.

Although Rockwood has not reached the total allocation in any year to date, Nelson commented that "The amount per family isn't enough." The PAT legislation covers four home visits in an eight-month period. "The home visits," said Louise Nelson, "are the heart of the program, and every other month is not enough, particularly in the first two years, when the child is changing so rapidly." She asked Dr. Vento if Rockwood could fund a fifth home visit for at-risk families with Community Education funds, and he agreed.

The PAT legislation did not mandate screening until the third year, but the Rockwood district started screening children in the second year, using volunteers and Community Education funds. "We wanted to get our feet wet and learn how to screen," said Nelson, "so we offered screening for the three- and four-year-olds in our pre-school program. We screened about 175 children."

In order to save money, Nelson plans to "cut back on duplicate offerings of workshops at different sites, which don't have the participation to justify the cost, and offer a greater variety instead."

The parent-education classes and pre-school program at Rockwood are fee-driven.

Lessons from this Site

Recognizing, Not Replacing the Parent

Before the implementation of PAT, legislators in Missouri had some concerns about potential criticism that they were attempting to replace the parent. "But with PAT," said Dr. Vento, "it's clear that we're not replacing the parent, we're recognizing the parent as the child's first teacher."

Marriage of Community Education and a State Mandate

The PAT legislation put the school districts of Missouri on the spot: within a year, they had to set up the administration of the program, and hire and train staff. In the Rockwood school district, the superintendent felt that Community Education, which had a proven history of working with pre-schoolers and their parents, was a natural home for this state-wide initiative.

The Difficulty of Reaching the At-Risk

State-wide, recruiting has been a problem for PAT. In the Rockwood School District, Community Education had mechanisms in place to recruit families. However, they tended to reach the same kinds of families who already sought out the fee-driven programs; other populations proved harder to reach. A new grant will help reach teen parents, but no consistent funding mechanism exists to support the staff time it takes to develop the linkages necessary to reach more of the at-risk parents.

Working with Part-Time Staff

The Early Childhood Development Act mandated a certain amount of training or relevant experience for PAT staff in addition to PAT certification. Nelson said she had no difficulty finding qualified staff, and added that "most people are working part-time because it meets other needs for them. Many are parents of young children or have worked a number of years and now want to go part-time." Louise Nelson is the only employee under Dr. Vento who has a contract, works full-time, and receives a teacher's benefits. Not one of the forty-three people working for her in PAT, parent education, or the pre-school has insurance coverage. Only staff members who work more than twenty hours get money put toward their retirement.

Advantages to Location in Community Education

Community Education subsidized PAT activities, enabling Nelson to enhance the existing program when the resources available from the state limited the amount of service PAT could provide. PAT also benefited from the existing linkages between Community Education and other community institutions, like the hospital that came to the rescue when PAT needed a location for the mandated screening.

Advantages for Community Education

PAT services are free to participating families. However, this suburban population demands more than the PAT program provides, and has the resources to pay for it. In effect, the PAT program creates a demand for fee-driven parent-education classes and the tuition-based pre-school.

Dr. Vento stressed the ability of Community Education to maximize the use of school facilities. "We thrive on having people using the schools. Last year, we had 55,000 people using our buildings." PAT can be a first exposure to the Community Education offerings. "If parents get involved with their children in

PAT," said Nelson, they'll become aware of all the other programs available to them through Community Education throughout the district."

South Toms River, New Jersey

Community Education & Family Support and Education: "The advantage to having STAR in Community Education, as opposed to an agency, is that the credibility is there. For example, Community Education does the school-age child care. Parents come to us because they're confident in the schools."

Deatra Gabriella, Director of Community Education,
South Toms River Regional School District

Community Education in New Jersey

According to Barry Semple, former Specialist for Adult and Community Education in the New Jersey Department of Education, Community Education got its start in New Jersey in the late 1960s. The original legislation passed in 1964, with a focus on Adult Education. The legislation subsidized salaries for leaders within local school districts.

In the 1970s, legislation mandated a Community Education model, including the use of advisory councils. During this period, the state Community Education Association merged with the Adult Education Association.

According to Katherine Mark, Adult Education Specialist at the New Jersey Department of Education, state support for Community Education came to an end in 1983. At that time, the number of state staff in Community Education went from three to zero.

Deatra Gabriella, the Director of Community Education at the South Toms River Regional District, which continued to have a program after state support ended, said that "Community Education is seen as 'nice,' that we're doing more with the taxpayer's money. But we're not seen as primary. That's the state's attitude. The morale is low, and there's probably less support than ever coming from the state."

Program Setting

Gabriella described South Toms River as a suburban district, spread out over forty-two square miles. The effect on her programming is that "We have to make things convenient. One thing we try to do, because it's a large commuting population, is put things out all over the district so it's convenient for them. They're driving a long way home, and they don't need to drive further to take a class. It's a matter of convenience -- getting one instructor to twenty people, instead of the other way around. But other than that, our program is not unique to a suburban area -- for example, Paterson has adopted it."

South Toms River Elementary is a sending district for Toms River; one distinguishing characteristic, said Gabriella, is that "South Toms River has the largest percentage of minority students in the district. Generally, the economic status and educational level are below the surrounding areas. According to the 1980 census, 46 percent of the adults lack a high-school diploma." Twenty-seven percent of the students are minorities.

Barry Semple recalled that when the school was built, "There was real concern, you might even say hostility, in the community. One part of the city was predominantly white and there was concern about desegregation. There were a lot of senior citizens in the area who were concerned about their taxes going up. So the school was really only built because it was sold as a community center."

Program Goals

The goals of STAR are to: provide parents with alternative approaches to parenting; improve parenting and communications skills; and improve parents' self-concept.

"We're looking to improve communication and discipline and the home environment," said Gabriella, "and through that, the child's performance in school. We're striving to have the school and the parents working together on the same wavelength. The basic idea is that if the home is topsy-turvy, the child isn't going to be able to focus on academics, so we've got to address the home issues."

Program History

Deatra Gabriella, the Director of Community Education, was the force behind the STAR program. "I was at a conference and one of the things we were discussing was A Nation At Risk. I came back and was talking to some of the teachers about it, and we discussed the fact that teachers can't do it alone. They needed parent support. When you're in an educational situation, you can't afford to overlook the research, which shows that kids with support at home do better in school. I asked a counselor to get involved, and I had one person on the advisory board who was interested. The advisory group helped with the original proposal."

With no state support available for Community Education, Gabriella turned to Adult Education. "We started with a mini-grant through Adult Education to adopt and adapt existing curricula."

Gabriella emphasized that the program did not approach parents as though they had failed. "I came up with STAR because I wanted to have a positive image. I didn't want it to sound like a downer. Later I came up with the words to fit STAR -- Systematic Training for Affirmative Relationships. I wanted people to feel like they were stars if they were in this program, and it's caught on. People like to say they're in the program."

Program Characteristics

Services

The STAR Parenting Program offers parent/child classes, parent-only classes, family events, lectures and speakers, and a newsletter. Classes meet once a week for four to ten weeks. Classes are offered for parents of elementary age and younger children, parents of teens, step-parents, and teachers.

The program is under the auspices of the school district; any new class, said Gabriella, would be "presented to the school district's curriculum committee. The Assistant Superintendent and the board members would decide if it's okay. So far, if the parents are happy, they're happy, unless a budget crisis comes up."

The original program came from Gabriella, with help from the advisory board. Since then, parents themselves have suggested ways the program might grow. "Usually the idea for a new class will come from the parents. For instance, in the fall we'll be adding a class for working couples. This class was something we heard the parents say they wanted.

"A few new classes are ones that the parents wouldn't necessarily clamor for, like Families Talk about Sexuality. The first year of that class, the counselors in the schools were funded by a national grant to prevent teen pregnancy, and we promoted and publicized the course. So that wasn't parent-driven initially. But the parents were so positive that we continued it."

One addition to the STAR classes was unusual: a class for teachers. "A lot of school personnel have taken our courses," said Gabriella. "Originally, when they went into our regular classes, they would wear

their teacher hat and not their parent hat and that disturbed the group. So now we have STET for teachers, and they take that instead."

Participants

207 parents and teachers participated in the STAR and STET programs during 1987-88.

Gabriella was not sure whether the parents fell into any particular socio-economic group. "I don't think it's just the hard-core middle-class," she said, "but without follow-up, it's hard to say." The majority of the participants are mothers. "We try very hard, if there's a couple, to get both parents to come. Our return slip says I/we will attend, and we strongly encourage both to come. But we still see more women than men."

The parents who don't stick with the program fall into two categories, said Gabriella: "Either they couldn't deal with the concepts or they became sick or a job interfered. Some people always come into the group and when the instructor tells them they have to change their own behavior, they walk out. When they find out there's no magic wand, they don't want to work at it, to do things that need practice.

"It's either dissatisfaction with our basic premises or some adult problem. We had one woman complain because the instructors try to involve the whole group and this particular parent was very shy. So I had her talk to the instructor, and they worked things out, she did stay with it. I didn't wonder that there were problems at home if she was that shy about talking and discussing things."

Participants, said Gabriella, "hear about us in two ways. Our publicity -- flyers and newsletters -- and word of mouth. Rarely TV. Word of mouth works the best -- if a friend tells you they've been in the program, you're more inclined to go. Then agency people call and want something for their clients. We also have a displaced homemaker program that's housed and promoted here, run by the St. Francis Center. We do get some referrals from outside the district, from Social Service and the Welfare Department's Reach program, and Family Court.

"Initially, we had to have a much more intense outreach for this program. And even now, people complain that they didn't hear about the program. So we're doing a general mailing to every parent in the district to put an end to that. We also tell parents on parents' night, and when they visit the schools."

The program is in constant demand, said Gabriella. "We could be filled in the summer, but we don't offer anything, mostly for the convenience of our teachers."

Curriculum

"With the original grant," said Gabriella, "we took some general things -- Footsteps, and the American Guidance curriculum, and combined them. We made up our own pre- and post-test. We started out with a general program, and then found out what was hassling people -- dealing with their teenagers, dealing with the school, whatever was causing friction, and we addressed that. In the future, we will deal with specific work the kids are doing -- like how to help your child with math, which we'll be doing in the fall.

"We did keep in mind the economic situation of the sending district. One beautiful thing about the American Guidance curriculum is that it's not boring to a college graduate, but it also uses a lot of flip cards and other techniques for those with less education. I found PET, for example, too advanced, vocabulary-wise. We're always on the lookout for new things, that's why we send people to workshops. We recently ordered some videotapes that come from a different program, but we found that they helped discussions. I allow the instructors flexibility. Every class is a little bit different."

Coordination with Public School Programs

STAR Parenting offers a workshop called PLACES -- Parents Learning to Assist Children in Elementary School. The four sessions cover introduction to school success; working with your child at home; working with the teacher; and working with the school.

"Next year," said Gabriella, "we'll be doing specific mechanical things like how to help your child with math. We'll get training from some people at Rutgers for that. Another thing we may do is coordinate with the head of substance and alcohol abuse and work with the counselor so that we work with the parents at the same time that the counselor is working with the kids."

Linkage to the Surrounding Community

STAR uses linkages to other agencies primarily for purposes of referral. "The teachers know when something is beyond their situation to handle," said Gabriella. "We refer to Mental Health, the Department of Youth and Family Services, Parents Anonymous. And I sit on the budget council for Alcohol and Drug Abuse that handles all the programs for the county. We give information. It's good to have a close relationship with those agencies, because you don't want to send clients just anywhere. You want to refer to people who are effective. Most of the linkages we have are informal, although the school district does have an agreement with the DYFS to refer parents and children all the way around."

STAR also receives referrals from several outside agencies, including Family Court and Social Services. Often, said Gabriella, other agencies look to STAR for the parenting piece of a larger program. For example, "The Women's Commission wants to do a cable program on parenting and have our people do it. Basically all the agencies send people to us to fill one component of the need."

Funding Sources

The 1987-88 budget for STAR was $13,520. Half of the funding for STAR comes from the school district general funds, the other half from federal Chapter II monies.

Parents pay a fee for the classes, which makes up a small portion of the budget. "The charges to the parents recover the textbook and maybe one section of instruction," said Gabriella, "but we find that people value something more if they pay for it, and are more likely to show up."

Lessons from this Site

Support from the District

Over the years, support for Community Education from the state disappeared. Similarly, said Gabriella, "There used to be a state-level office of parent involvement, but that got cut." Even with cuts at the state level, said Gabriella, the STAR program is "still something the district feels strongly about. They keep the program going. The head of the curriculum committee is a strong supporter. He always recommends to the board that we continue." Other Community Education directors have not been able to provide parenting programs. "We had a workshop here to try to get other directors interested in STAR but it's hard when there's no funding at the state level."

Support from the district has kept parent fees nominal. Other Community Education programs, said Gabriella, "pay their own way. But if we had to have people cover the costs of this, it would keep some parents out." The district uses parent satisfaction as its index of whether to continue the program, and so far, the program is secure. Gabriella regularly shows excerpts from parent evaluations to the school board. Not only does the school want to keep the parents happy, it also supports the STAR program because the

goals are so clearly in line with its own. "The school district has its own agenda and interest in us in a way they don't have in a program like exercise -- I mean, it's nice to be healthy, and have healthy parents, but it's not the same thing."

Home-School Partnership

The STAR program is tied to the schools. One of the primary forms of outreach is through the schools; the ultimate goal is improved school performance. In addition to the regular classes, whose focus is on parent/child relationships, the STAR program offers several innovative classes with a special emphasis on the home-school partnership: PLACES and STET. STAR's annual report for 1987-88 quoted one parent who had taken the PLACES course as saying "Toms River Regional Schools are extremely involved and more dedicated to the education of children/parents than I ever imagined." This kind of response, as well as the concrete information parents receive from a course like PLACES, suggests a that a home-school partnership is growing through STAR.

One effect of educating parents can be that the school system experiences a shock when these parents have a new attitude towards their children's education. Anticipating this, Gabriella added a course for teachers to the program. "We wanted the teachers to know what we were doing in our classes so they wouldn't balk at it if the parents came in with a different idea of what their responsibility was. We held one time, three-hour workshops at all the sites. Often they wanted more. We now also offer systematic Training for Effective Teaching, a ten-session course, two hours per session, from American Guidance. We offer this for Continuing Education units."

Parent Support

The primary goal of STAR is to improve the home situation in order to enhance the child's performance in school. However, the classes provide a forum for parents to address some of their own concerns. "One of the sessions we had originally," said Gabriella, "called for people to list their strengths. And what we discovered was that more than half of the people said they had no strengths, particularly if they were female. We realized we had to do workshops on self-image, because of course that affects the children. So we supplemented the material we had with that."

The focus on parent as well as child can have an effect on the parent's own schooling. "We had one woman decide to go back and get her high-school diploma after being in the program. That's not part of the design, but it's a nice result."

The parents may also find that although they come to the class for their children, they value the companionship and insights of other parents. "When a group wants more," said Gabriella, "we have had support groups coming out of the classes."

Space Constraints

The STAR program is primarily for parents, many of whom work, so classes are typically held at night, when space is not difficult to find. "There's a daytime space crisis, but not at all at night," said Gabriella. However, space constraints make it difficult to work with young children. "A lot of parents would like us to do a pre-school, but we don't have the space to do it." The competition for space, said Gabriella, "comes from the fact that special education is mandated and Community Education is not. Some of the buildings will have five special education classes. They use a low ratio -- maybe five or seven children in a class, so that takes up a lot of space."

For the parents' classes, "We've always used our own facilities up to now. For one thing, South Toms River is already designated as a community school. I know they say that people don't want to go to schools, but I haven't found that to be the case. We've thought about having classes in people's homes, but I think people may not want to go to the home of someone they don't know. In my job at Burlington County College, I worked into a storefront operation that we moved into a surplus school building. We had greater space needs in the school then when we were in the storefront. According to what you read, it should have been the other way around."

In response to the size of the district, said Gabriella, "We move the classes all around. The parents might say, why don't you offer this class at Washington Street? If we hear enough of that, we will."

Voluntary vs. Mandatory Programs

Although the program is open to all, Gabriella felt that a voluntary program might not reach the families at highest risk. "You're not necessarily going to get everybody who needs it -- you can't exactly walk up to them and say, we think you need this. You can only recommend to people that they come." STAR does receive referrals from social-service agencies, but "It's hard, even when it's mandatory, to get them to attend."

Form Follows Funding

Without support from the state, the program is stable but unlikely to expand dramatically. "The last little light we had was the Adult Education grant," said Gabriella, "and now we're not even in that category any more. I've heard of money from the federal government for Even Start, but I don't know if funds would be available to us. I'd love to do Missouri's PAT program [a program that combines home visits and center-based parenting education for parents of pre-schoolers]. I went out and saw that program. But my boss, the assistant senior Superintendent, feels that's more than we can get into right now. Of course it would cost a lot to provide PAT -- that would take some doing. It would take a lot of time to get them to approve a budget of that magnitude. " Even though the sending district is one with a high drop-out rate, STAR cannot afford to offer a more intensive program to give parents basic education. "I'd also love to do the Kentucky program, [a high-school completion program combined with parenting education for parents of three- and four-year-olds]."

With the main source of money coming from the school district, the program must serve the parents of school-age children. Without other forms of aid, it's unlikely the program will be able to serve younger children.

A Program With a Positive Image

Gabriella stressed the importance of giving the program positive connotations. At one point, another Community Education director told her that "he wouldn't have this program because it's like admitting that you've failed, and I said, 'If you see it that way, it's no wonder you won't have the program, because that is the message you're sending out. We like to see it as being enlightened to be in the program.'"

Part-time Staff

"Everybody's part-time," said Gabriella, "so there are no benefits. I'm always trying to recruit. I'm constantly worried that one of the two main teachers might be going away. I started recruiting after the second year.

"I started with the core two people who wrote the initial grant. They were teachers in the school who had Master's degrees. I have added people with a counseling background. The teachers happen to have MAs, but if someone were excellent, I would take that person without a Master's. There are no regulations on Community Education -- only Adult Education Basic Skills teachers need to be certified." Thus far, the only restriction on who could teach in the program has been bureaucratic: "We had an assistant principal who had done parenting and had a counseling background, but they wouldn't let him teach because he was administration, which was a shame."

Although the teachers are part-time, said Gabriella, "My involvement with them and with school-age child care is more intense than with jazzercise, for example."

New Hyde Park, New York

Community Education & Family Support and Education: "I believe that the educational institution in the community is the leading educator in the community, and I don't just mean the children in the schools but the people, children, families who come into the system, and those who've left the system. The community as a whole supports the schools and it's incumbent upon us to serve the community from birth to death. If you're dealing with the community, you're dealing with parents, whatever their needs."

Barbara Keller, Director, Herricks Community Center

Community Education in New York

In 1978, New York received federal planning funds for Community Education, and the State Department of Education hired a Specialist in Adult and Community Education. When federal money expired, the Mott Foundation continued to fund the position until 1985. According to Robert Purga, who held the position of Specialist, during that time fifty-five out of two hundred and eighty-three school districts established Community Education programs. The majority converted unused school buildings into Community Centers and offered programs for adults and senior citizens. "Parent education is really moving now," said Purga, but he added that its inclusion in Community Education depended largely on the local director's vision and on the needs of the community.

New York has no legislation or formal state plan for Community Education. The Adult and Community Education Specialist, with the aid of a Regents sub-committee, had written a policy paper titled "School-Community Partnerships," which advocated a change from the model of using school facilities for the community to a more active involvement of the community in the schools. Under the new state Commissioner, Thomas Sobol, this became the Schools as Community Sites initiative. Beginning in January, 1988, fourteen schools became target sites for this program; each one receives $150,000 to develop an innovative curriculum that uses community resources and involves the community, particularly parents. Each school district has funding for a pre-kindergarten program. Schools as Community Sites is the first Community Education initiative in New York to receive state funding.

Program Setting

New Hyde Park is a suburban area whose population is an economic, racial, and religious mix. Close to one quarter of the school-age population attends private, special, or parochial schools. According to Barbara Keller, Director of the Herricks Community Center, "Being suburban affects programming tremendously. We're usually dealing with commuter parents who aren't available a lot of the time. We have a large two-worker population. There are specific problems of growing up in the suburbs. Children grow up isolated, I don't care what suburb it is. There's a problem with transportation, and along with that goes a lack of responsibilities, because the children depend on other people to take them everywhere. There's too much affluence, a lot of competition on the children to succeed, and sometimes unrealistic goals are set for them. There aren't enough family-minded activities. The kids don't have enough activities outside of school."

Program History

According to Keller, Herricks is "one of the largest Community Centers on Long Island. There had been 7,000 children in the district, and it fell to 3,200, so they were going to get rid of a building, as they did with two others. But the superintendent saved it as a Community Center." Herricks opened in 1979.

"When I came to the Center," said Keller, "there were eleven rental occupants, including a day-care center and a nursery, so I decided to build parent support in cooperation with them, and networked with the school district, meeting with counselors, and so on."

Although Herricks is part of the public school district, Keller did not just want to reach the families of children in the public schools. With so many children in private or parochial schools, she wanted to bring families together. "The independent religious organizations had parent education and religious things, but I'm a networker and a unifier. I felt these were global needs and that parents needed to come together. We have one location, and can network with other agencies to bring parents here. This unifies people, so we can look at broad-based community issues rather than isolated issues. For example, we have children in parochial schools and private schools and public schools on the same block, but they may have the same problems, the same concerns."

Program Goals

Classes at the Herricks Community Center seek to provide parents with child development information and create support groups among parents with similar needs and concerns. "What we do is mostly prevention," said Keller.

Program Characteristics

Services

The Herricks Community Center offers parent/child classes, support groups, parent-only classes, family events, lectures and guest speakers. Classes typically meet for two hours once a week for one to ten weeks. Offerings include mother/child classes for children 12-18 months, 24-30 months, and 30-40 months; infant stimulation classes; workshops on nutrition; support groups for parents of infants; support groups for young parents; support groups for parents of pre-schoolers to seven-year-olds; support groups for parents of pre-schoolers to seven-year-olds for whom English is a second language; workshops on child safety; classes on parenting adolescents; classes on child and adolescent development; workshops on adolescent depression; and workshops on children's school attitudes.

Keller adds new classes with advice from members of the community. "There are two or three people I pull in: a retired person from the district who is a family educator, a counselor, and so on. I ask them to draw up the plans. On top of that, programs come out of professionals in the area like social workers. For example, one special education teacher in the district wants to do a workshop on human sexuality for parents of special education children. I depend on the community for their input, but I also have to have a certain amount of confidence in my own instincts as a human being, having lived through different phases and been a parent."

Some programs come about because of changes in the population. "I target programs based on need -- like the single parents, or the foreign parents. We have so many single parents who need to network and build an activity base and a social base, and we need to sensitize the teachers and counselors to their needs, the way we did with parents of special education children earlier.

"We also have a growing [East] Indian community with different values and family structure. Some of the mothers belong to sects that won't allow them to come to meetings at night, for example. But there are a lot of professional women, a lot of doctors, so we have people of many different levels who can't always mix. I'm working with them to learn what their needs are and try to meet them.

"We have many Asian families who have different attitudes towards children. I'm learning that Asian families are one hundred percent family-minded but they're also very competitive, and that carries over to the children. I've run a whole series called 'Welcome to the United States' which was really about understanding being a parent in the U.S."

As classes are added, Keller looks for appropriate teachers. "We build on the district staff. Parents feel comfortable with them. Then we include professionals from the community, the hospitals, the other agencies and institutions. I recruit, and get recommendations from other agencies."

Participants

Approximately 350 parents attended classes and/or workshops at the Herricks Community Center in 1987-88. Participants included parents of infants, parents of pre-schoolers, parents of school age children, parents of adolescents, and parents for whom English is a second language.

Keller felt that the parents the programs were reaching most effectively were the "super-committed parents, the ones who come to everything." The parents who were not coming to classes were those "with too many problems, whose level of need is just too high. We don't handle families with serious difficulties -- they're dealt with by the psychologist or the social worker at the school."

Outreach is not a problem in a facility the size of Herricks, said Keller. "We have 5,000 people using the building, so we don't need to do much. The Parent Associations are here, the civic groups meet here. Everybody's already here. We don't really need to go out and find them."

However, it is harder to get parents into classes than into some other activities "because of the pressures of dual worker families."

Curriculum

"I went to a workshop and saw PET (Parent Effectiveness Training)," said Keller. "The thing about PET that seemed appealing was that it was built around videos, which the parents identified with. They show normal family situations with a lot of humor, so the parents enjoy the program and then have conversations about different parenting techniques, and give positive feedback to each other. We need more materials like that. We have had surveys, one thing the parents wanted was the PET curriculum again. The Family Resource Coalition (FRC) has excellent materials, a lot of visuals. So I suggested that the district join the FRC." Other classes use the Active Parenting series.

Coordination with Public School Programs

The Herricks Community Center hosted a series of free workshops for parents of children K-5, 6-8, 9-10, and 11-12. A social worker and several guidance counselors from the schools led the workshops. Sponsorship of the workshops came from the Herricks Public School Office of Special Education Services with the support and cooperation of the District Council of PTAs and the Herricks Youth Council. "I'd like to hook up with the high school and elementary school to become even more sensitive to the needs of the family," said Keller.

Linkage to the Surrounding Community

Herricks currently has a number of highly developed advisory councils. "I believe a lot in councils," said Keller. "I have one on Community Education, one on senior citizens, one on the non-profit corporation, and plan to have one for parent education. I work very hard to make them representative -- that comes from having been in public relations -- it's like market research, you don't need 1,000 if you have ten that are representative, so I try to have a parent of every variety to give me input. I go to the various congregations, for example, and get them to identify someone who will join.

"I use the model of the Youth Council, which I designed. The Youth Council is an umbrella for members of the community. It meets monthly. Under Carter, when there was the Conference on the Family, I testified on the Youth Council Model. It's so simple, and it works anywhere, because it brings together people who are working with young people off on their own and creates some kind of unity. You have to have a non-threatening vehicle that's above what everybody does individually. You have the rabbi sitting next to the priest, the public school person next to the parochial school person. You're eating, and talking, and getting to know one another. The next time the Superintendent needs a representative for something, he has them all there."

The primary effect of the advisory councils on parenting classes has been to suggest new offerings; one inter-agency linkage has been a series of workshops offered in cooperation with local hospitals.

Funding Sources

95 percent of the Herricks Community Center Continuing Education funding comes from fees and charges; five per cent comes from school district general fund and grants. Any revenues of the center go into the general fund of the school district. The Herricks Community Center Fund, Inc., is a not-for-profit corporation that enables the Center to receive contributions from business, industry, and individuals.

Some classes are free; for others, parents pay a fee, which ranges from $3 to $8 per session.

Lessons From this Site

Upbeat Programming

In order to attract and maintain participation, said Keller, she has constantly had to steer clear of the therapeutic approach. "We've had overkill on scare-type things, so I'm moving toward more positive, normal classes. We were too therapeutic, and that's really not our role."

"Participation is increasing because the programs are upbeat. In all my years of involvement, I've learned that parents don't want to share their problems in their own community -- they need programs that are not focused on problems. People, especially working parents, want to go out and have fun, not be depressed, or upset, which is why we're reversing it and making the programs and topics upbeat."

More parents are coming to programs, but Keller still feels that the parents who come out are the ones "who come to everything." The families with multiple problems, who might need a more therapeutic approach, are not coming to classes.

Isolation from the District

From time to time, the cost of keeping the Herricks Community Center open has threatened its security. "There have been waves of people saying, 'Why should we support this Center?'" said Keller. "They wanted the district to sell the building. But there was an enormous uproar, meetings, newspapers, television -- the Center was too much a part of the community."

Nevertheless, Community Education, particularly when housed outside the K-12 buildings, runs the risk of being an unknown quantity. "Because we're in a separate building, we're isolated," said Keller. "The public school staff don't know what to make of you, no matter how much you do. I've been making inroads on a slow, non-threatening basis with the high school staff to do coordinated programs. I'd like to see more work done with the high-school students about the complexities of parenting, that it's not just having a baby. I think part of the problem is that we don't educate people to be parents."

"The parent associations," said Keller, "want specific programs, but they're not committed to a sequential curriculum of parent education." In turn, the school district responds to what parents want.

Keller feels that the Community Center's programming has acted as a catalyst within the school system. "I think we've encouraged a growing number of programs to come forward, and it's becoming more common for the school staff to offer programs."

Free vs. Fee-Based Services

Currently, most of the parenting education at Herricks Community Center is fee-supported. Keller feels this places a limitation on participation. "If you get professionals, like social workers, and psychologists, or well known speakers, they cost money. A lot of programs we have to make self-sustaining, and if they were free -- if we had underwriters so we could have no fees -- then we could get more people in."

The economic mix of the community limits the availability of grant money. "Unfortunately," said Keller, "we're not eligible for Parent Involvement funds, because they're designated for poverty areas. We don't get the federal or state funds, even though a high percentage of our participants are low-income. So we're providing the services, but not getting the money. I've applied to do parent education through a NASBE 'community alliance' grant so that we could offer parent education free.

"I would love to see a really sequential curriculum always in place, with funding to pay the proper people, so parents could always find what they needed, it would always be there for them."

State College, Pennsylvania

Community Education & Family Support and Education: "It's as natural as apple pie. It's the most appropriate location because ultimately, the closer the schools and the home work together and integrate their resources, the greater the likelihood we'll have a mature and stable child in the next generation. Neither partner should delegate their responsibility away to the other. You need the partnership for the child and the future. If it falls down, that's when you have problems."

Nancy Desmond, Director, Community Education

Community Education in Pennsylvania

In 1974, the Mott Foundation gave money to Shippensburg College to fund a regional Community Education Center that was administered through the State Department of Education. From 1979 to 1983, while federal money was available, the State Department of Education had a position in Community Education. Currently, said the Division Manager of Pupil Personnel Services at the State Department of Education, he is charged with "answering questions and forwarding the concept of Community Education in whatever way we can without any money."

Community Education in Pennsylvania receives no financial support from the state, and does not have access to state Adult Education funds. According to Margaret Mahler, former director of the Center for Community Education at Indiana University, local programs tend to receive funding from the school district operating fund.

John Meerbach, the division manager of Pupil Personnel Services at the State Department of Education, has surveyed local programs in the state and found that they offer primarily athletics and recreation programs, although broader Community Education programs do operate through parks and recreation departments and cooperative extension agencies.

Program Setting

State College, said Connie Schulz, the Community Education Homemaking Consultant, "was classified as a metropolis four years ago. The school district also includes five rural townships, although they are getting more suburban all the time."

According to Nancy Desmond, the Director of Community Education for the district, State College is now "referred to as a metropolitan community in a rural setting. A number of five- to seven-story buildings are now in place or under construction, changing our 'city skyline.' Penn State University, which has 34,000 to 35,000 students, has made education the primary business and has established a highly educated core of people. Family farming is a hallmark of the county, but in those homes a breadwinner usually works 'up at the College.' There is very little industry, essentially ones that depend heavily on research and technological development."

The centrality of education, said Connie Schulz, means that "State College has a larger than average number of college-bound students." The other side of the coin is that "a lot of people think that means there is no disadvantaged population here, and are surprised that it's right under their noses."

Desmond agreed. "Slums are non-existent, but poverty exists. About fifteen percent of Centre County's 200,000 population is without a high school diploma. Our poor are isolated in the hills and valleys of the Appalachian range through our area." Minorities make up three percent of the community.

Program Goals

The goals of the Homemaking Consultant Program are to: help parents improve homemaking and parenting skills to enable their children to learn more effectively in school; coordinate instruction with the resources of the Adult Basic Education Program and related school programs such as Chapter I; develop a supportive link between home, school, and community; and provide services according to individuals' needs and goals.

Schulz described the goals of the parenting programs as a whole: "To support the family. We want them to feel that parents can come together, receive support and knowledge, and affirm their role as their child's most important teacher."

Program History

The district's Community Education Long Range Plan, 1984-87 lists "training and educational programs for parents of pre-school and school-age children" as its fifth objective for "new or increased emphasis." Parenting, as Desmond explained, had been part of the program for many years before that. "In 1966, a graduate student in Home Economics came to the school district as an experience in learning. The dean of the College of Home Economics had her positioned here with regular reporting to her faculty advisor. The two of them worked to develop programs about Home Economics programs for the public, and found that Vocational Education funds were available. They developed the position of the Homemaking Consultant, who visits the home of children who show any sign of a disruptive life style.

"Over the years, there's been a natural strengthening of our interest in parenting. I came in as the director of the program around 1969. At about that time, the Home Economist changed, and she and I both saw the need to expand to broad-based parent education courses. I asked her to devote one-quarter of her time to developing parent education. Just last year, we finally closed the age spectrum for parents of children from birth to twelfth grade; parents taking the course called, 'Survival Course for Parents of Teenagers' may have even older children who have already matriculated. It's finally a systematic program of parent education."

Recently, the Homemaking Consultant has focused on teen parents. "The teen parent program," Desmond explained, "resulted from the survey of a county-wide task force sponsored by the Council of Human Services of the Centre County Commissioner's Office of Human Service Planning, and the United Way. The Council is a consortium of all public and private human services in the county."

"I started working with the Centre County Council of Human Services in 1984," said Schulz. "The county survey identified teen parents as a 'special need group'. At the same time, the Alternative Program at the high school was noticing that several students there who were teen parents wanted to be there because of the flexible schedule. The alternative school was very concerned about losing students because they had no child care. So we worked with the Child Development Council and with the school to develop cooperative day care. The Child Development Council provides all the staffing. That was 1985, before the Pennsylvania Department of Education made funds available for teen parent programs. When that happened, the director of the Alternative Program worked with a steering committee to secure a grant to fund parenting education. Some of the money went towards my salary to make sure I'd be available to work with the teens as parent educator."

This first Community Education program for teens, Parenting and Childbirth for Teens (PACT), was school-based. Teen Parents as Teachers (TPAT), a home-based program, followed. "Funding for teen parenting programs got stronger," said Schulz. "Federal Vocational funds became available."

"At first," said Desmond, "Board members questioned whether we were duplicating existing services, but once we passed that scrutiny, we received the money to start a home-based program for teens, using Missouri's Parents as First Teachers (PAT) model."

Unlike the earlier Pennsylvania Department of Education funding, Schulz explained, the new funding guidelines didn't "limit the recipients to teens in school. It covers them until they are twenty-one, and many of them need that support -- they are going on, some of them thinking of having a second child."

The Community Education program also has a Home Management Out-Reach Specialist, whose mandate is to serve single parents, the disabled, and the elderly. "The three out-reach Home Economists combine their efforts," said Desmond, "to reach parents of all ages in need of instruction."

Program Characteristics

Services

Community Education offers parents an array of services, some home-based and some center-based. The Homemaking Consultant Program offers home visits, mini-classes, courses, and presentations to agencies. The Education for Parenthood program offers parent/child classes for parents and children up to thirty months, and parent-only classes for parents of children from preschool through high school. The Home Management Out-Reach program offers educational home visits, career counseling and referrals to single parents.

The school-based program for teens, PACT, offers child care, counseling, support groups, health education and monitoring, transportation for infants, vocational counseling, and parent education classes (available for academic credit) to teens enrolled in school. PACT also provides home instruction if the mother is unable to obtain day care for her infant, for up to six weeks following childbirth, when the child can begin to attend the day care program.

The home-based program for teens, TPAT, provides home visits, monthly group meetings (with child care provided), and health and developmental screening for children to parents up to the age of twenty-one, whether or not they are enrolled in school.

Education for Parenthood classes generally meet once a week for six to eight weeks. Home visits in the various programs range in frequency from once a week to twice a year, depending on the need of the parent. In addition, the Homemaking Consultant offers a quarterly newsletter to all parents. Taken together, the programs have five staff members working with parents.

Community Education also co-sponsors an annual day-long conference called "Focus on the Family" for parents, child-care providers, and agency professionals. "The conference came about," said Schulz, "because Nancy and I talked about wanting to work cooperatively with other agencies, and Nancy thought we could do a conference. She was already co-sponsoring a small-business conference very successfully. We got together with the department of Individual and Family Studies at Penn State and with the Child Development Council, which is our local day-care provider and the local recipient of Title XX child-care funds. We got a mini-grant for $1,000 from the school district. The second year, more people came out asking to be involved. Planning for the 1989 program is in progress."

Participants

In 1987-88, the Homemaking Consultant served seventy individual parents and ninety-three parents in groups; TPAT served fifty-four teen parents; PACT served eleven teen mothers; the Out-Reach Home Management Specialist served seventeen single parents; one hundred and fifty-nine parents enrolled in Education for Parenthood classes; and seventy-four parents attended the Focus on the Family Conference. Schulz felt that in all, the programs had reached less than twenty-five percent of the eligible parents in the district.

According to Desmond, the parenting classes are "having increasing success with the 0-3 age group, because we're tied in closely with the Childbirth Education Association (CEA). Our instructors meet with parents when they attend CEA classes and let them know we're there for them after they've had the child. So we've built continuity with that pre-delivery educational system and the results are better than they would be otherwise. We're pleased with the number of fathers we have attending, because they are also the child's care-giver. We have day and night classes to accommodate both parents. Parents also join in from TPAT because they liked what they've experienced there."

Both Schulz and Desmond pointed to the effects on parenting classes of the changes in society as a whole. "Now with Dr. T. Berry Brazelton on TV and that kind of thing," said Schulz, "parents are starting to focus on parenting as a skill. With the changing nature of family life, it's more of a concern -- the roles aren't known any more."

On the other hand, parents are under pressures that may make it difficult for them to attend classes. "People are busy, parents in particular. That's one reason the one-day conference was such a success." The issue becomes more complicated when the classes are for parents without their children. "Taking time to be a better parent is a considered decision," said Desmond. "Sometimes you have to choose which is better: to take a class, or to stay home with your child?" The program offers parents-only classes in the evening; parent/child classes meet both during the day and in the evening.

Promotion of Community Education programs has changed over time. "It used to be that we were the only game in town," said Desmond. "Now everybody's offering courses -- often free. We have to be creative in advertising so that people can find us. One excellent method we have is public access television. I don't know how long that will last. Right now it's supported by the cable money and the eleven member organizations and available at no cost.

"We use every imaginable means. We mail course information to all students who've attended a Community Education program. We do interviews on the radio on the favorite local chat show. We have live coverage of our registration days where the teachers talk about their classes. We also let other agencies know we're available to present programs."

Community Education's Guidelines for Teachers suggests do-it-yourself advertising: "Because of limited funds for program publicity, you are asked to market your course(s) to the people most likely to enroll."

Schulz added that "we send course flyers and the conference programs home with school children. Community Education also runs a full-page ad in the newspaper listing all the courses."

Schulz did feel that outreach had to be more intense for parenting than for other Community Education classes "because parenting is so personal. It can be perceived as threatening." In particular, for the home-based Homemaking Consultant and Home Management Out-Reach programs, the approach has to be "very personal, one on one." The Homemaking Consultant and Home Management Out-Reach Specialist make home visits to inform parents about the program long before they begin making educational home visits. "I usually call first," said Schulz. "I won't drop in unless the person has no phone. I feel it doesn't respect them to do that. Now that I've been doing this a while, I know what to say when I call: 'I don't know if you know all the things we have available for parents. Can I come out and talk to you about some of them?' We also mention parent education in the homemaking brochure, and I get all kinds of calls from people through that. Various agencies will refer names of people to me. I always offer my services informally. Sometimes the agency will want me to take a stronger approach." This year, seven new referrals to the Homemaking Consultant came from human service agencies, including the Food Bank, the Christian Mission, and the Adult Services Program.

The other programs also use human service agencies for outreach. The Home Management Out-Reach Specialist contacted twenty agencies for initial referrals. Referrals to PACT came from agencies

and area physicians as well as district counselors and nurses. The Centre County Council for Human Services did initial outreach for TPAT by distributing its brochure.

Schulz has also reached parents through Project Self-Sufficiency (PSS). "People from various agencies act as case managers for single parents who want to become self-sufficient. The case managers brainstorm, make plans, set goals for the parents." This year, Schulz served as case manager for three PSS clients in this county-based program.

Curriculum

The program's approach to curriculum is not rigid, said Schulz. "We start every class democratically -- 'What are your concerns?'" The classes use a variety of packaged curricula. "We use Active Parenting, PAT, and materials from the Center for Early Adolescence in Carrboro, North Carolina. They have a series of workshops that condense nicely into our six-week course. We have a course called 'A Survival Course for Parents of Teens' that was very popular."

For the parent/child classes, the instructor "pulls together all different things. I've seen her use Without Spoiling or Spanking, and the Tot-line. There's a training for parent education developed by the Guerneys at Penn State that's similar to STEP. It features self-practice tests, and a low reading level, which is good. We also use STEP-teen and PREP."

For home visits, Schulz uses the Responsive Parenting curriculum from American Guidance. "I like it because it focuses on specific issues. The mothers want to know what to do with their kids, not why their kids are doing what they are doing. I've shared it with personnel from other agencies who are now using it. At one point, a local shelter for abused women wanted us to work with them, but it's hard for us to coordinate schedules with women in crisis, so now they're using that curriculum themselves."

Coordination with Public School Programs

Perhaps because the program depends on the school district for funding, the Long Range Plan, 1984-87 describes the work of the Homemaking Consultant as meeting "the needs of school children through their guardians," thus keeping the emphasis consonant with that of the K-12 program.

The school district symbolically welcomes the child into the school system at birth. "When the child is born," said Desmond, "the parents get a life-time certificate for the child from the public schools. It's very handsome, and it's a nice idea."

The closest coordination, however, takes place when the children have reached school age. "Connie works closely with the other people when developing the parent education program," said Desmond. "She developed the framework with the K-12 staff and with parents." Last year, twenty-seven referrals to the Homemaking Consultant came from school personnel. "There are close ties at all levels with Chapter I staff, Pupil-Personnel Services, instructional staff, and the administration," said Schulz. "When they have inservice," added Desmond, "one of our staff may be asked to present."

"The Director of Pupil-Personnel Services is very cooperative and encourages his counselors to serve as teachers or guest speakers for our courses," said Schulz. "I work closely with K-12 staff and am invited to attend some of their case meetings."

PACT is another example of coordination, this time with the Alternative Program of the High School. "I'm an instructor there," said Schulz, "and share my time with them." In 1988-89, the Teen Parent Educator from TPAT, the home-based program, will receive partial funding from PACT to personalize the services for teens in school.

Occasionally, however, fulfilling the district's requests for programming proves difficult. "One course we offered that lacked sufficient enrollment to open," said Schulz, "was a course for parents discussing sexuality. That came about when there was a major uproar in the school district over the sexuality course for the students. The administration asked us to design a curriculum-related course for the parents. As usual, there was a fee attached, which irritated the parents, and we never had enough enrollments to run the course. We have offered a one-time session at our conference, and that went well. Twenty-five people attended."

Community Education also supports the district's efforts through a program called VIPS (Volunteers in Public Schools). Through VIPS, volunteers receive preparation for classroom placement. In 1987-88, 167 volunteers gave 4,100 hours of help to the school system. "They are very loyal," said Desmond. "Teachers know they can count on them for regular contribution. It's usually the parents who think it's wonderful the child's gone off to school and want to know what they can do to help."

Linkage to the Surrounding Community

The Homemaking Consultant and other Community Education staff members work jointly with other representatives from other agencies to refer, recruit, and provide services to parents.

At the most basic level, the program provides information to parents. "At the conference," said Desmond, "we have a Human Services display area, where each agency exhibits the kinds of support it provides to families. This display of the scope of services available in Centre County is a real eye-opener."

For the purposes of referral, Schulz feels a close relationship with other agencies is essential "if you want to get anywhere. If we're not offering what parents need, we want to be able to refer them to where they can get it." In the case of TPAT, if a child shows developmental delay, the Teen Parent Educator automatically refers the parent to the Infant Evaluation Program of Centre County. "If someone is depressed, we always suggest counseling. There's a counseling service at the university, and we can refer there, or to agencies."

The Home Management Out-Reach Specialist provides each client with a list of resource agencies and programs; in 1987-88, thirty agencies gave and received referrals or provided information to clients.

The program's philosophy with referrals, said Desmond, is to give the individual responsibility. "We try to raise people's confidence. We tell them where the help is. We don't make the calls for them, but we often call afterwards to make sure they've made the call." As an example of follow-up, of the teens involved in PACT in 1987-88, the number using the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) nutrition program went from O before coming to PACT to 8 after being in the program; the number using subsidized pre-natal care went from O to 4; and the number using subsidized day care went from O to 3. "We also have checks on overuse of the system," said Desmond, "because we see that too. There's a clearinghouse run by the Christian Mission that will let us know who else has helped a given person in the past. Often agencies see connections that individuals don't, so we work together to keep track of families."

Schulz has worked with a number of other organizations both to recruit parents into one of the Community Education programs and to provide a continuum of service. The first of these is Childbirth Education. "Everyone assumes that if you're having a baby, you'll go to those classes," said Schulz, "but that you only go to parent education if you're having problems. We link them together, so people know it's a healthy thing. The instructor of our parent/child classes does a presentation on the last night of the childbirth classes, and lets parents know about our classes. They're behind us one hundred percent."

Along with the Teen Parent Educator, Schulz is currently working with the Centre County Community Hospital Maternity Nurses, the Childbirth Education Association, the OB-GYN Group, Inc., and the Infant Evaluation program to coordinate pre-natal, childbirth, and post-natal education.

Another linkage Schulz established was with Park Forest Day Nursery, which is "privately funded, but like Head Start. They have a mother's meeting every Tuesday, and I occasionally go in and do presentations on various topics. I've become an accepted part of the group, which is an asset, because the mothers represent a real cross-section of our disadvantaged population. They like and accept me and will ask me to come and sit down and talk to them on an outreach visit." The school district pays for Schulz's time at Park Forest Day Nursery. "Most mothers there," said Schultz, "already have children in the school system." Park Forest Day Nursery also provides day care for children of parents taking Adult Basic Education classes at their site.

The Community Education program has worked with the Child Development Council to create a number of services: the Council agreed to provide child-care for the PACT program while Community Education provided the parent educator; and the two organizations jointly sponsored the Focus on the Family Conference. The cooperating entities were: Centre County Drug and Alcohol Program/Mental Health and Mental Retardation; Chapter I Program SCASD; Childbirth Education Association; Cooperative Extension Service; Family Health Services, Inc.; Department of Individual and Family Studies, Penn State University; Mid Central Chapter of the Pennsylvania Home Economics Association; PTA/PTO Council of SCASD; State College Area Jaycees; Year of the Reader Task Force; and the Youth Service Bureau.

Funding Sources

In 1987-88, funds for the parenting programs came from the following sources: fifty percent from grants; forty percent from the school district; and ten percent from fees and charges. The district supports the Homemaking Consultant. The Home Management Outreach Program and the Teen Parents as Teachers Program support themselves through grants. Education for Parenthood classes are fee-supported. In 1986-87 and 1987-88, the school district granted special budget requests for parent education; all special budget requests were frozen in 1988-89 due to funding constraints.

"We still get state Vocational Education funding for the Homemaking Consultant," said Desmond, "but it's small, about $3.20 per hour, offsetting the salary." Schulz said that her position is "one of the few in Community Education that is funded by the school board. I don't need to generate fees to cover my existence -- at this point."

The funding for TPAT has changed slightly, according to Desmond. "We got funded 100 per cent for the first year, 80 percent for the second year. For the second year, we're contributing things in kind like administrative and counseling time, supplies, facilities and maintenance. Although the budget is constant, we're actually cutting back services because salaries are going up. There are fewer hours for the Teen Parent Educator."

In the projected budget for 1989-90, the district will pick up forty percent of PACT funding, including the salary of the Homemaking Consultant and the cost of home instruction; the State Department of Education will cover sixty percent.

Lessons from this Site

Agency cooperation takes concerted, individual effort. "The whole staff, said Desmond, "works very hard to integrate with other agencies. We don't miss a month at the Council for Human Services meetings. We also send out our newsletter and do what I call piggybacking. We put it together in such a way that other agencies can easily copy it excerpt it and add it to their own material."

Schulz has found that her involvement on the Council helps her when it comes time to refer parents to other organizations. "Because I'm involved in the Centre County Council for Human Services, I know people by their first names and can say, 'Why don't you give so-and-so a call?' which is much more effective than just asking the client, 'Why don't you go to this agency?'"

Free vs. Fee-Based Services

The program is a mix of fee-based services with grant-funded services at little or no cost to the parent. In the fee-based classes, said Desmond, "Lately we've been having intermittent success in enrollment, because we've been forced to double the costs, due to cutbacks from the school board. We're going to the board once again on appeal that parent education be partially funded." The current fees for classes range from $46 to $54 for an individual parent and from $77 to $95 for a couple.

Ironically, the fee has made it difficult for Schulz to work with parents of school-age children. "I tried to work with the PTA/PTO but they were turned off by the fact that there was a fee."

When TPAT got off the ground, Schulz had hoped that that kind of program could spread to other groups. "My thought was that the teen PAT program would generate interest and support and that we could spread PAT to other parents. But I'm aware that it's not a big priority, especially with the current funding crunch. Because of the fee, we just can't do everything I dream of. It would be nice to have increased funding for parent education. I'm hoping that the new parent education advisory sub-committee will generate local support for funding for parent education."

Coordinating to Fill in the Gaps

In the State College area, said Desmond, "We have an agency for everything. The leadership couldn't be more intelligent, or more strong, but the services couldn't be more splintered. We need to join forces and avoid multiplicity." The history of the parenting programs is one of efforts to avoid duplication and to fill gaps in existing services.

Initially, said Schulz, "When I came on as the Homemaking Consultant, there were only two classes: one for parents of elementary-age kids; and one for parents of teenagers. The interest in pre-school was on the rise, but there were turf issues involved. Two other groups in town thought they should be offering that, so we backed off, and then no one ended up offering it."

Community Education stepped into that void, and now offers classes for a continuum of ages. Now, said Desmond, "I'd say we're fast gaining a reputation in preschool parent education. We understood that nursery schools and child care programs held occasional parent meetings, but they weren't doing anything substantial. We saw a void, and they agreed. So now we are glad to offer a sequence of classes on a regular basis."

When Community Education proposed TPAT, the issue was not one of turf, but duplication. "What came into question," said Desmond, "was duplication with the Basic Skills Education program of the County, operated by the counseling services. But their funded project directed services to welfare recipients and others of very low income, those hardly able to make it. Our projects held no income restrictions. The County Human Services Planning Office endorsed our proposal because we were to serve the people they couldn't serve. They happily refer to us."

In the case of another grant application, for the Home Management Out-Reach Specialist, the issue was once again one of turf. "The Vocational Education guidelines," said Desmond, "specified a section for homemakers, but someone else in our area had already staked a claim to that, so we targeted three other

groups that are peculiarly large in our area: seniors, single parents, and the disabled. We knew from our census survey that many of our children came from single-parent homes."

Schulz feels that her participation in inter-agency bodies has helped ease some of the tensions. "The Centre County Human Services Council has given me a very good relationship with the other agencies. We do a lot more together now, I'm proud of that. I think the conference did some of that bringing people together."

Parent Support and Two-Generational Effects

Schulz runs the parenting classes "democratically," letting parents take the lead in setting the agenda. Similarly, after the first Focus on the Family conference, said Schulz, "We invited the 32 parents who attended the first conference to attend our planning sessions, and three did. They talked to other parents and got input, which they brought to the meetings."

Although the ultimate goal is to help the child, much of what happens in the various parenting programs changes the adult's life as well, through the combination of programs available through Community Education. The Home Management Out-Reach Specialist regularly refers parents to ABE, GED, and vocational training. About five to ten parents a year take advantage of ABE or GED courses. As another service, the Community Education program provides day care for children of parents enrolled in adult literacy courses.

"We've had a mother go from the teen parent program to the homemaking consultant over to ABE and career counseling and end up at Penn State," said Desmond. "She came out of a basic need, but we guided her through her life choices." Of the fifty-four teens participating in TPAT in 1987-88, twenty completed high school, five received the GED, ten were working to complete the GED, and five were seeking post-secondary training or education.

"People really do feel empowered," said Schulz. "That's the basis of the PAT program, and it's really helped my focus." The teen parents, said Schulz, particularly appreciated this approach. "The teens really thought we were going to be like their mothers and tell them what to do. We've affirmed that we see them as specialists in their child."

Positive Contact with the Schools

"I think it's very important that we be school based," said Desmond. "We are consistent with the educational model. For too long, people have acted as though education is something in a book that begins at age six."

The most immediate benefit of the location to the program, said Schulz, is that the space "is free, when it's available." Nevertheless, "It can be a disadvantage for people who don't like education." The program sees one of its goals as making people comfortable with the school system. "One reason we do the outreach is to help people feel more positive about the schools."

Having parenting programs inside the schools, said Desmond, is "good public relations for the school. When you have people in Childbirth Education classes walking through the building and seeing Community Education, Elementary Education, the Alternative Program, and Pupil-Personnel Services all together in the same place, they may think, 'Hey, there's always something here to help us.'"

A benefit to the schools is the early contact with potential volunteers. "I'm not sure how direct a tie there is between VIPS and parent education," said Desmond, "but I'd say the familiarity with the school pays off, with parents feeling more in partnership with their children's teachers."

A Shortage of Space

The disadvantage of location in the schools is a shortage of space. "We've had difficulties," said Schulz. We're now in an old high school with three other programs. With the baby boomlet we're having in the elementary schools, our program location isn't secure. At night, we can have what we want, but day-time courses have been more popular."

As with funding, one issue is the district's priorities. "Community Education is one of the last concerns of many administrators," said Schulz. "Their concern is K-12. We don't have priority in issuing space." So far, the occasional alternative has been to "rent space from a church, but that plays in to the fee issue. That's not satisfactory. More space may be available in five years, so we have to try to hang in there."

Reaching and Serving At-Risk Families

"If we're not reaching the people who need parenting education the most with our classes," said Schulz, "we try to reach them in other ways, with our Out-Reach program, and we do reach a good number of them. I'm very thankful we have the Out-Reach, or they wouldn't be served. It's a very low-key way to get to people."

Even with a low-key approach, said Schulz, "I'd have to say the residents we're least effective at reaching are the people who are truly suffering but not disadvantaged. They might have the money to come to the class but are afraid to be involved and get the feedback that something is wrong. It's hard to get to them. If the school sees a problem, it will offer a home visit from me, but they won't always accept me. If we had more of a drop-in center, they might be free to wander in, chat, and get comfortable with us. We had a woman enrolled in several of our classes who became a concern of the other mothers because of the way she behaved with her child. Her attitude was really disruptive. The instructor talked to me and I encouraged her to talk to the woman, but the woman didn't feel she had problems. She didn't sign up again."

The process of building trust can be extremely slow and demanding. "It may take anywhere from one contact to twenty for different people to feel comfortable addressing issues related to their skills in managing home and family," said Schulz. Part of the issue can be cultural. "In the very rural areas," said Desmond, "communications skills are at an all-time low compared to people in an urban setting. They have little practice having people in their homes. Then there's a town/gown problem. People always ask if you're from 'the college.' So we had to have a trust-building period, but we're getting over that. Now there's a chain of referrals from one family to another. Everyone here is getting calls. People have more telephones now, too, although they may have one one month and not the next. There's also a high mobility rate -- if they can't pay the rent, they're gone. Homelessness is on the increase around here. Luckily, we have a marvelous network of agencies ready to deal with surfacing problems."

Families with basic needs challenge a program in two ways: to reach a population that is unstable, remote, and often without transportation; and then, having reached that population, to meet their needs.

In a rural area, program administrators must decide whether to try to bring the program to the parents, or the parents to the program. The State College program tries to do both. As a result, said Desmond, "We need a great deal of funding for travel. It's a factor in every budget. We always ask staff members to share transportation whenever possible."

Getting parents to the program can also be a financial issue. "We do have a good bus system," said Desmond. "I think we're accessible to residents, but there are many unserved in the far corners of the district. There's also the question of priorities -- people may have enough gas to go for groceries, but not

to come in for a class." In the case of PACT, the district provides transportation for the infants of school-age parents; if that proves unworkable, volunteers provide the transportation.

Families at risk may also have basic needs beyond parenting skills. In TPAT, for example, the Teen Parent Educator "adds home management instruction to the PAT curriculum according to their needs. We had to be available to help with more than parenting. That's where the skills of a home economist brings strength to our Parents as Teachers model." As the content of the program expands, the border between education and social service becomes less clear. "One member of the board," said Desmond, "always questions whether what we're doing is social work, but we're true to the education role. It's true that if you're referring someone to a source of social welfare, then the relationship between education and social resources isn't always clear."

Ultimately, the family's financial circumstances may be the basis of its psychological well-being, so among other things, the teen programs and Homemaking Consultant program offer career counseling and referral to literacy instruction. Looking to the future, Desmond believes, "We need to connect to the world that provides the career options. You have to include the community-at-large and work with business and industry. With the three-way partnership -- home, school, and business -- students can sample their options for survival economically, as well as psychologically and emotionally."

Memphis, Tennessee

Community Education & Family Support and Education: "If you're going to serve school-age or teen parents I can't see another way to do it. When you use the school resources you face the governance and politics of a large bureaucracy, so you need a logical linkage both to outside agencies and to our students."

Linda Bryant, Director, Community Education

Community Education in Tennessee

Community Education in Tennessee dates back to the 1930s, when the Tennessee Valley Authority established schools to teach adults both job skills and skills to improve their daily lives. Since then, life-long learning has taken many forms in the state, from county extension agents to the education committees of local chambers of commerce. The Mott Foundation established the Tennessee Center for Community Education in 1973. Ed Hantell, former Director of the Center, established satellite centers at the regional campuses of the state universities; fifty-six professors taught and consulted locally.

Tennessee passed enabling legislation for Community Education in 1978. According to Brent Polton, Executive Director of the Tennessee State School Board, that legislation "taught us the difficult lesson of the difference between 'may' and 'must.' The monies have always been local -- we've never had a single state appropriation."

The State Department of Education recently created the position of Executive Director of Adult and Community Education, which, said Polton, "formalized the relationship between Adult Basic Education and Community Education. Statewide, there's been a real jump in the commitment to literacy. The linkage of education to economics is gospel just now. In our most recent gubernatorial race, one of the candidates, McWherter, picked up on this and made it a part of his campaign." Now that McWherter is governor, the current mission of Adult and Community Education in Tennessee is breaking the cycle of illiteracy: two-thirds of the Adult Basic Education funds now goes to adult literacy programs. Ken McCullough, who came in with Governor McWherter to head up Adult and Community Education, uses the Community Education approach of "a lifelong learning habit" to frame the economic issue of job retraining.

In his State Plan for Adult Literacy, the Commissioner of Education, Charles Smith, links literacy and parenting. One objective he lists is to "identify the families of at-risk school students, particularly elementary students, and develop parent teaching programs which not only help parents guide their children, but teach parents literacy skills." McCullough also advocates group instruction for literacy. Among other things, he says, the group offers the "opportunity to discuss problems of parenting and to share thoughts about improving the quality of homelife for children."

Program Setting

According to Linda Bryant, Director of Community Education in Memphis, "There is so much poverty here, and has been for a hundred years -- the poor, undereducated Delta families who came to Memphis. We're now serving children of this background. They're second or third generation, but the educational characteristics haven't changed." Jacquelyn Littlefield, Director of the Department of Human Services' Project RAP (Responsible Adolescent Parenting), added that "Memphis has a large black population, and there's been 'white flight' out of the city." While the city's population is fifty percent black and fifty percent white, the K-12 population is eighty percent black and twenty percent white.

"We also have a large number of poor people, black and white, who come from Arkansas and Mississippi," added Littlefield. "Mississippi's Medicaid system is practically broke, so they come here for free health care. Of course, being urban, we also have a higher drug and crime problem. Many of our mothers live in high-crime areas."

The needs of this urban population are changing, said Susan James, Director of the Parenting Center of Memphis. "Memphis is becoming more and more cosmopolitan, you have a lot of people who are isolated, without extended family, or friends, or a church group."

Linda Bryant commented on the "general movement going on in the city right now -- a recognition by politicians, business people and education leaders that Memphis is at a crossroads of history, a chance to move from the 'backwater' that we've been called to a progressive city. All these people understand that we have a massive population of undereducated people here. The Superintendent of Schools has made remarkable statements about the importance of the dealing with the at-risk population, and has pulled business and community leaders in to support working with the at-risk." Brent Polton confirmed her observation. "I think the leaders of the community have a new sense of urgency. They're looking for some way to get a handle on this, and the focus now is on Early Childhood and getting the parents involved. It's not just the social worker types who are saying all this stuff, it's the private sector, too." The Mayor of Shelby County, William Morris, has embarked on a broad welfare-reform effort called "Free the Children," that takes a systemic perspective on poverty; aims intervention primarily at children, but recognizes the family, rather than individual members, as the client; and considers the school an important ally in the initiative, the center for delivering services.

Program Goals

The goals of New Parents As Teachers (NPAT) are: to assist parents from low socio-economic backgrounds to develop positive parenting skills and increased self-esteem; to reduce child abuse and/or neglect; to reduce developmental delays; to assist the parent in securing employment, completing education, and getting off welfare; to assist the parents in developing an active, positive relationship with the schools; and to teach parents how to help their children learn.

Program History

According to Linda Bryant, "NPAT started because the Governor made discretionary funds available to be granted by the Department of Education to local institutions. There were very loose guidelines. We didn't know what to ask for, so we modeled on the Missouri program, Parents as First Teachers. We had input from a large group of educators, social service and health people. We thought we won the money set aside for age 0-3 because we'd written such a great grant, but it turns out Memphis was the only one to apply. I was given the responsibility for the program. At the time, I was in charge of a special project to increase parent involvement in a designated school, recognizing the community needs and developing programming -- it was really Community Education, but they didn't call it that -- which is why they thought of having me take over Community Education. When I came to Community Education, I pulled NPAT along with me. There was nowhere else it would fit, and I wanted to maintain the integrity of the program. Within the school system people generally don't know this subject matter, and so what you get is a watered-down first grade curriculum."

Program Characteristics

Services

Parents attend NPAT classes for two hours a day, four days a week. Each class contains approximately fifteen parents and their children. In addition, NPAT staff conduct weekly home visits. Participating infants and toddlers are also screened for potential developmental delay. A toy-lending library is available to parents. NPAT's staff consists of one professional and two para-professionals.

Teacher/Coordinator Merkia Alexander describes a typical class: "First thing in the morning, we have a 'morning mixer,' at which the parents talk about what's going on right then, whether it's the baby has a temperature, or needs some clothing, whatever. That lasts about thirty minutes or so. After that, the parents and children separate, and the parents go to in-depth parenting classes on child development, health and safety. They learn to care for and understand the whole child, and be in tune with the needs of a child aged zero to three. We have parents sharing ideas, responding to each other."

Participants

NPAT served eighty parents in its first year and sixty-nine in its second. All had an annual income of less than $9,999, and all were black. According to Merkia Alexander, "We started out with a population ages 19-27, but with word of mouth, the program spread in the community and the age expanded. We serve everyone, from teens to a 59-year-old grandmother. A lot of family members come in. One person joins, and then says, 'Hey, I'm in this program and it's really good,' and you get the whole family coming in. I can think of one parent who works, but takes time off to come, and when she can't come, she has her mother come with her child to the group. We have a lot of school dropouts, where the parent attends to get the GED and does parenting sessions too, but doesn't spend as much time with the other parents. We've added more day care for parents attending GED, ABE, or computer classes."

NPAT uses the schools to reach parents. The program sends information home with the children in elementary school. Alexander explained: "We ask if they have a little brother or sister at home, and if they do, we send home a flyer, and tell them to bring it back. We do that for about two weeks, then we follow it up with a phone call, and say, 'We have this information, are you interested in joining?'"

Curriculum

According to Bryant, "We followed the Missouri model, and I went to Missouri to get training. We adopted the PAT curriculum and modified it. Halfway through we tossed it up in the air -- a lot of their assumptions didn't make sense for us, like that everyone could read. We didn't use the hand-outs, we used portions of the videos. And we brought in every community resource we could find.

"Our curriculum is very informal. The lead teacher draws up the lesson plan, and shows it to me. We go to some extent with what parents want -- they wanted to hear about careers, for example. We had people come from the Displaced Homemaker program come and talk to the parents, and people from GED and Adult Vocational Education. We even had the Fire Department come in and do a song and dance because I guess they're looking for women to hire. For the children, our emphasis is on emotional and socio-affective development. They don't have a chance for appropriate interaction with other kids."

Alexander said, "We use The First Three Years of Life. We do general things about the age category, and then modify it to the ages of the children actually there on that given day. We're very relaxed and let the parents feel their way. We show them the skill, and watch them demonstrate it with the child before they leave that day. The program encourages their self-esteem -- they begin to see that they are actually their child's first teacher. We also note the needs of the parents and discuss community resources, with an emphasis on health care. We bring in anyone we can -- nurses, dentists -- on a daily basis. This is something the parents ask for constantly. We're trying to get them motivated to use the services that are available to them."

Community Education has an ongoing partnership with the Chapter I Homebased Education Program. According to Bryant, the Chapter I guidelines "were very specific -- 1,000 Thou Shalt Nots, a lot more than the Thou Shalts. Among other things, the regulations say that the Chapter I program can't do the recruitment and screening. The LEA is supposed to provide that service. We do it through Community Education." Bryant sends flyers to schools, community centers, and churches, and has radio announcements about the program. Dolores B. Lewis, coordinator of the Chapter I program, said, "I don't know what I'd do without them, since I'm not allowed to do this myself." Linda Bryant has also provided inservice on parenting for the Chapter I staff.

Although the NPAT focuses on parenting and education, its involvement with families does not stop there. Alexander described the NPAT program as "an umbrella to the family until they can understand what they need and take responsibility for themselves. We don't withdraw our help until they can do that." The range of the families' needs means that NPAT interacts frequently with other services. Alexander said, "We're in contact every week with the housing department, the health department, the police, utilities, since all these things are part of our parents' daily lives." The program makes referrals, but often takes a more active approach. According to Alexander, the families' greatest need is health care. "A lot of parents have problems making it to their clinic appointments. We knew about the Health Fair at a local hospital, where they would do all kinds of testing, so we referred all parents having problems with clinic appointments to the Health Fair, and we physically picked them up and brought them there."

Community Education has an ongoing partnership with two other family support and education programs in the community: the Department of Human Services' Project RAP (Responsible Adolescent Parenting); and the Parenting Center of Memphis. Bryant explained how these partnerships came about: "Because of my former work in a parent involvement program, I made an effort to work with each of the existing programs. I was already a member of their boards, so I knew what they were doing."

Project RAP is a demonstration project of the Department of Human Services (DHS), with funds from the Governor and Commissioner, responding to the high repeat pregnancy rate and high infant mortality rate in the state. Memphis has the only such program in the state; DHS has a five-year goal to replicate Project RAP in every county in the state.

Community Education refers parents to Project RAP; and through Community Education, Project RAP holds weekly group sessions in three school sites. Project RAP's director, Jacquelyn Littlefield, described the advantages of the linkage with Community Education: "There are many, among them the referral process for reaching the young people who need services. The idea behind Community Education is that the school is the center of the community, especially in deprived communities, and everything is there. For us, that means security, utilities, everything that makes up the mechanics of our operation."

According to Littlefield, the advantages flow both ways. "At one time, we needed really good parenting training, and our counselors were not qualified to give it. Linda Bryant was required to have the certified teachers for NPAT, but she couldn't justify offering the course in a particular location because her enrollment wasn't high enough. So we brought her all of our girls -- she got what she needed, and we got what we needed. We play 'swap-out' like that all the time."

Littlefield observes, however, that "our program has to be sold to the community, and when you're selling, it can be a disadvantage to Community Education to be linked to DHS, because we don't have a very good rep -- 'all those bums on welfare' -- so we don't say a whole lot about Welfare when we sell the

program. We talk about Project RAP instead. But I could see that we could be a liability to Community Education."

The Parenting Center of Memphis is a non-profit organization, funded largely by the Junior League, that provides: Mother Love, an infant-stimulation class for first-time mothers, eighteen years and older; Advanced Mother Love, a follow-up class for graduates of Mother Love; and Father Love, a class for acknowledged teen fathers. The linkage between Community Education and the Parenting Center was natural: Linda Bryant and Susan James, the Center's Director, had been friends and neighbors for years; Bryant was on the Parenting Center's board. "Our goals are practically identical," said James. "They're obviously interested in bringing families into the school as an ecological whole; we believe in building the parent's self esteem and having that trickle down to the child."

Through Community Education, the Parenting Center provides classes in four schools. James said that the "advantage to the linkage is that groups take place where the need is. The schools know the needs of each sector, and call our attention to it." She has found Community Education an effective linkage to the schools. "We also talk to school counselors for referrals, but they aren't as supportive. Having been a school teacher, I think that's because they're overworked. They have too much to do without worrying about us. Community Education has been wonderful. I don't know what I'd do without their support." In turn, NPAT staff participated in the Parenting Center's year-end workshop, in which programs working with this population discussed resources for parents; the outcome was submitted to each program.

Funding Sources

In 1986-87, the NPAT budget was $49,000; in 1987-88, $20,000. The original funding for NPAT came as a grant from the Department of Education. In the second year, explained Linda Bryant, "our funding was cut in half. We had several full-time staff members, now they're part-time. Funding for the first year was awarded so late that some places couldn't use all of it, so the money was divided up and re-allocated the second year, and we managed to get about half of what we'd had the first year. We understand we should get a grant for next year about the size of the first year, using Adult Education funds to fund the staff. So right now, the NPAT program is in transition to intergenerational literacy."

Lessons From this Site

A New Approach to Community Education

According to Bryant, "Community Education has operated in Memphis since 1972 under the administration of a private, non-profit group, called Memphis Better Schools, which was a coalition of volunteers. Under Memphis Better Schools, Community Education programs had limited administrative support. In 1987, Memphis Better Schools lobbied the schools to take over Community Education, which they did, creating a Division of Community Education within the Department of Pupil Services. Before, Community Education was more bread-making and basket-weaving. The new Community Education program under the school system is moving in the direction of early education and intervention, tutoring, literacy, remedial, and at-risk programming. The program is serving at-risk children, adults, and young people."

Linda Bryant won the grant for NPAT before taking over Community Education in Memphis. Her desire "to maintain the integrity of the program" brought NPAT into Community Education. She came to Community Education in Memphis at a time of fundamental change; its new mission was entirely consonant with a program like NPAT.

The placement of NPAT in Community Education was unusual among the state's Parent Involvement programs. Dr. Donald Lueder, who conducted an evaluation of the programs, commented, "I don't see community educators taking the initiative in the home-school partnership movement. This may turn out to be a fatal mistake."

The new mission of Community Education in Memphis is apparent in the difference between NPAT staff and other Community Education staff. "Because NPAT is within the school system," said Bryant, "we had to have some teachers from within the system, and they are paid on the same as classroom teachers. The NPAT staff are better paid than Community Education staff -- the Community Education scale is very low. And they're treated better than regular Community Education staff. The school personnel don't understand what most Community Education people do. The perception is that NPAT teachers have a real job to go to. They go to a classroom and do real things."

A Strong, Personal Network

Brent Polton described Memphis as "the biggest small town in the country." In many ways, the linkages in Memphis have a small-town feel. Susan James, of the Parenting Center, describes the coordination as "very informal, a constant give and take. It's pretty incestuous: we're all on the same boards." The Community Education director sits on the boards of many other agencies, which gives her an extensive network of community resources. For example, she is a member of the Memphis/Shelby County Children and Youth Council, whose volunteers now provide annual screening of four-year-olds, using Community Education and other resources. Bryant also worked with the Children and Youth Council and the Parenting Center of Memphis to plan a parenting conference for teens.

Susan James highlighted the usefulness of this personal linkage: "My experience is that government-run agencies can have rules and regulations that don't benefit the clients. One rule has to go for everyone, nothing can go by the individual. I usually talk mainly to one person in each office. Some of these agencies are so large I don't think the right hand knows what the left is doing. It boggles my mind. But if you know someone in an agency, you can talk in general terms about a case, or sometimes even in specifics, and get the information you need." Jacquelyn Littlefield agreed that "often in an agency there's one person who gets things done, so you have to get access to that person. It's a matter of building relationships and then when you have a case of special need, you know who owes you one."

Bryant agreed on the importance of linkages. "Of course, it's always crucial to have referral services. But I can give you another example. When the second year of NPAT came, at the beginning of the year, we had no dollars. But the parents wanted us to continue, so we were trying to operate even though we had no assurance of any money. We had a linkage with a public library, so we had a librarian work with a Community Educator to provide the services. The Community Educator was being paid anyway, and the library had a grant for innovative programming that let them pay for transportation and snacks. The school didn't pay for anything."

Pooling Resources

As Susan James put it, "An urban area is unique in the magnitude of the problem. Often people ask me, 'Doesn't your agency step on other people's turf?' But the problem is so overwhelming, there's no end to the clients. So we try to see whose program better fits a client or reach an area that isn't being reached by someone else. The need is so great that it makes us pool resources more and network, and use everyone's expertise."

According to Jacquelyn Littlefield, "Resources were scarce for all of us. We all recognized that if we didn't join forces, no one agency could do it alone. The community has to be behind you. I guess the climate was right and all the agencies developed a clear understanding of each other. At first there were boundary lines, but the bottom line is that those kids out there are the clients, and that's what matters. For example, at first the Department of Health and Environment was really cold to us. They were very threatened. They said they knew every pregnant girl in Memphis and every one had a home nurse and didn't need us. I think they expected this to be a joint program and when it wasn't they were worried. But then we got the staff together and the counselors and nurses hit it off immediately -- they all knew the same

people. And we got them on our advisory board. Now, two years down the road, you'd never know we'd had any problems. The Health Department is trying to get access to Robert Wood Johnson money, and we've been very outspoken in their support."

Brent Polton, Executive Director of the State School Board, observed that in Community Education, the "real successful programs are not necessarily the ones that got built up as a new enterprise from the ground, but the ones where someone put together all the little pieces of resources in the community."

By creating a network of partnerships, Linda Bryant has "tried to pull together the existing elements that make sense for this population. If we could, having the programs under one administration would be ideal. We'll probably never get it all under one administration, but Community Education is the logical vehicle to help other agencies see who to serve and how to serve them, rather than just providing space and making school facilities available."

Placement in the Schools

Linda Bryant reflected that "if you have the proper outreach, you can get people to come to the schools, and I believe it's an advantage to be in the schools. You want parents involved and to identify with the school system and with their children's education."

Susan James said that considers it "an advantage" to provide her Mother Love classes in a school building. "Before, we were in some pretty bad roach-infested areas. Now we're in schools that have school-based day care and nursery schools, which is an ideal setting. The girls know they go to school to learn, so they come with that attitude. And they get to know that the day care and nursery are there for them. Some of the day-care workers who work with the children during the day time stay and get to know the girls."

Not every school is an ideal setting, however. Jacquelyn Littlefield recounted that Project RAP was in "one school that had after-school ball players coming in and out, and it wasn't private, which it needs to be. In every community we go to, we have to have a few people in the community willing to go to bat for us. In one community, we started a group in a school, but the people in that school clearly had other priorities. One week we were in a gym, another week in an auditorium, so we had to say I'm sorry, and leave. It meant we had to transport those girls farther away. We've had some principals who didn't want pregnant girls in the school at all, were anti any kind of social service in the schools. The guidance counselor wanted us there, but we had to have more support than that -- we went elsewhere. There are plenty of places that need us."

Bringing an outside program into the schools can be a way to address the needs of the school population without stirring up conservative opposition. Jacquelyn Littlefield, of DHS's Project RAP, noted the advantages of joining forces. "Being in the Bible Belt, there was a lot of furor over Family Life classes in the schools, because of the teaching of sex education and contraception. So the school looked upon us as a solution. We could go in where they had a recognized problem -- they provided the buildings, equipment, even some volunteers, and we came in to teach about v.d., contraception, and so on. The reasoning was, if there was any criticism, our agency was large enough to take the heat."

The relationship between the school board and these programs is growing. "As a rule," said Bryant, "the board is becoming familiar with what Community Education does. It is beginning to understand the linkage between providing school facilities and addressing the non-academic needs of children and families." The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction has been a strong supporter of the parenting initiatives associated with Community Education. According to Lewis, he introduced her to Bryant, which was the first step in arranging recruiting and screening for the Chapter I program. Susan James said that he "has been a wonderful resource, and has cleared paths for us. For example, we recently had 200 teen

parents at a workshop at MSU, which we were largely able to do because he let them miss half a day of school as a regular field trip."

Unstable Funding

Bryant said succinctly, "We just don't have the funds to reach everyone who needs the service. Or the staff. Which comes back to budget. It all comes down to dollars." Even the three-year demonstration project, Project RAP, does not have money in its budget for snacks for the participants. Jacquelyn Littlefield explained that "our funding goes for salaries, so we're forced to go to the community for the rest. We spend about a hundred dollars a month for food, which we purchase at a food bank for 12 cents a pound. But we have to get that money from the community, and it's not always easy. Because of the limitations on our state budget, we have to scrounge for crepe paper, materials to make toys, Mother's Day cards, Easter baskets, and so on." Susan James spoke of similar limitations. "We've had a lot of luck with people willing to fund specific programs and projects, but no one willing to fund the agency and staff salaries. They seem to feel it could be run entirely by volunteers, but you need people who are paid and accountable." James added that "of course we're in competition with other agencies for funding. There's only so much money around. But when I go to funding hearings, I have to say that every other agency up there deserves funding as much as we do."

Form Follows Funding

The shape of a program often changes with a change in funding source. NPAT came into being when grant money became available for parent involvement programs; when that money ran out, Bryant realigned the NPAT program in accord with the state's current literacy initiative.

The Parenting Center of Memphis followed a similar pattern. James explained that "back in 1981, a group of Health Department and Human Services people got together to address a need they saw in the community to assist parents and provide support. So they started the Parenting Center for middle-income parents -- there was no charge -- at a church. There was some infant stimulation, but mostly it was talking about parenting concerns. Pretty soon it was clear the group didn't need guidance and had its own autonomy. But there was still a need for those parents who wouldn't seek out information on their own, or even realize that they needed information. So in 1985, the Health Department decided the way to go was to address teen parents. At the time, money was available for teen pregnancy projects, so they decided to capitalize on that. They ran two groups as pilots with an infant-stimulation curriculum and decided after those two that it was definitely worthwhile. So they interested the Junior League in funding it. They didn't do it out of the Health Department for funding reasons -- there were too many cutbacks. It seems like every time I go over there they have lost a few more people.

"Now we're getting ready to change the services again. There's a cutback in money for teen pregnancy, so we're going to offer more services to the middle-income families to stay solvent. We're going to have to take more from the affluent to continue to serve everyone. We'll only be able to serve teen parents within school systems that will provide us with transportation and volunteers."

Transportation

Linda Bryant has not had difficulty finding space to offer NPAT classes. However, she added that "NPAT has been locked into one area of town where the primary concentration of participants is. The problem with being locked into one area is transportation. We don't provide it -- it's our primary problem. Again, it gets back to dollars."

When the Parenting Center offers classes, said James, parents "have to live within two miles of the site, unless they have their own transportation, because we are limited in how far we can go. In Memphis we have very limited public transportation, and we can't get the girls to use it. At one point we arranged to have some picnics in a central location and arranged for the girls to have bus passes -- we were going to have developmental screening and have past graduates come back with their babies -- and of the 25 or 30 girls who said they'd come, only half would show up. It's a chore to schlepp the baby and the diaper bag and the stroller and then transfer from one bus to another."

Jacquelyn Littlefield said that she had "strongly hoped for a transportation contract. Transportation is the key to our success. We bring the girls to the program and bring them home. Transportation is such a problem for us -- we simply can't let the girls loose at six o'clock when it's dark. If we had a transportation contract, the counselors could devote much more time and energy to the mothers. Instead, they have to make rounds to pick up the girls and bring them home -- several round for each group, because we don't have a van. And then they have to carry in supplies, which can be a TV and VCR or a camera, when we're taping the girls with their babies. So it can get pretty tiring when you've driven fifty miles."

Flexible Curricula, Flexible Staff

Bryant chose to adopt an existing model when applying for the state grant, but found that NPAT model simply didn't address the needs or abilities of the particular population she was trying to serve. Similarly, Jacquelyn Littlefield describes the Project RAP curriculum as "very fluid -- one module leads to another. It's been trial and error. We designed fifty to seventy segments, which we had to scale down, because the girls couldn't read that well. We're not rigid at all. As far as what they need to know about their children, we take our cues from them. Our emphasis is on child safety, and then on what to expect from the baby at different ages, and what the appropriate responses are. There are a lot of cultural patterns, too. They were spanked with a switch, and their grandmothers may still say that's the way to discipline a child. That brings us back to Community Education, because they have great material on discipline in their NPAT classes."

Program directors also spoke of the importance of finding staff who, as Susan James said, don't "give negative feelings to the clients." Jacquelyn Littlefield "looked for people without a punitive attitude, and some women who would be young enough to be good role models." Working with volunteers, Susan James often encounters women who say, "'I can't handle this, I don't have anything in my background to relate to this.' We have a few volunteers from the girls' own background. It makes a big difference. But if you're genuinely caring, you can develop a rapport, it just takes a little longer."

Recruiting Low-Income Families

"The things that work best," said Alexander, "are word of mouth, phone, and door-to-door knocking -- do you have a child zero to three, and so on." Linda Bryant added, "We also have outreach through public-health nurses, food stamp pick-up points, social service agencies, commodities pick-up. We've found TV and radio to be ineffective. Low-income families need personal contact. Canvassing is the best method, and also the most costly. And the canvassing has to be done by someone indigenous to the area."

Targeted vs. Universal Services

All of the programs linked to Community Education target at-risk families. Both Bryant and James expressed a desire to "serve a wider range of people, not just those with the greatest need." James added that "the middle-income parents often go along until there's a crisis, and then request classes on specific issues. I'd like to be reaching the two-worker families, but they are so tired and exhausted they don't want

to think about their kids or parenting classes. They tend to wait for a crisis to get information. So I'd like to do things for them that are more social, some just for parents, and some things to get parents and children playing together -- it's terrible to say that you have to arrange that kind of thing, but you do. But you need to set a tone that the family enjoys each other's company in order to head off a crisis."

Support for Parents

Merkia Alexander said that most of the NPAT parents "are not working, so this is time they can use more wisely by being involved in the program. It gives them a sense of responsibility to be involved. There are four parents I can think of who really tell the story of the program. I've watched them and observed their growth. They've molded their lives around the program, and now they go back home and provide structured contact with their children. They really listen to whatever the child needs, whether it's help with homework, or whatever. And they encourage the child, tell the child he can do better, and that they are there to help the child. Their example has given the staff and the other parents a positive feeling. Even one parent can be observed by other parents next to them, so the change in one is linked to a change in the next one.

"One teen parent said that because of her involvement in the program she'd arranged her own living arrangement, her own family structure, become independent, and made her own life. She said she'd done things she never thought she could do and her parents never thought she could do. She can see it and her child can see it."

Linda Bryant confirmed the effects on parents as well as children: "The intended effect of NPAT is the extent to which parents are buying into the importance of their children's education; the unintended effect is that they're returning to education themselves, either through ABE or GED, and to jobs. The mothers used to come with curlers in their hair, and they are taking more pride in their appearance, and have better, I guess you would call them, social graces."

Jacquelyn Littlefield, of Project RAP, observed that "these women have extremely low self-esteem; they're so indigent they have very few socialization skills. So we have buffets where they have to put on their 'company manners.' We've videotaped events, and the change in the women over a few months is amazing. There's a lot of sharing, a lot of shared babysitting. What we've done is create a support system in the community."

Ridgefield, Washington

Community Education & Family Support and Education: "We're working with the Community Education philosophy of having people in the community share their talents, and bringing people together in order to solve problems. In parenting, we use the same idea: all the ideas are out there, and when we come together there's a sharing of strengths."

Laurie Cornelius, Parent Educator

Community Education in Washington

According to Jerry Thornton, Director of the Washington Center for Community Education, Washington is a "thinly populated state for the most part. Out of 296 school districts, 200 have less than a thousand students; the largest 87 have 83 percent of the enrollment. Most of the population is located in the urban metropolitan areas in western Washington." The first Community Education program in a local district got underway in 1969. Currently, said Thornton, 52 or 53 districts have comprehensive programs.

The state has had Community Education legislation since 1973, but no state funding. "Generally," said Thornton, "you see a lot of multi-source funding, perhaps routing the programs through the community colleges. There are some local levies, and a lot of districts use fundraisers of one kind or another." Programs have traditionally relied on volunteers to teach classes.

In 1985, the legislation passed amendments to the Community Education Act that encourage local districts to "provide programs for prospective parents, foster parents and adoptive parents on parenting skills and problems of child abuse and methods to avoid child abuse situations."

Program Setting

Ridgefield is located in the south-west corner of the state. According to Laurie Cornelius, who teaches both the parents and the children in the Ridgefield program, the community is "very close, even though it's just north of a major metropolitan area. It's got a strong identity of 'We are Ridgefield,' and strong community values. It's a close community, and that in itself makes the program work."

Ridgefield is in transition, as Cornelius explained. "The community has been rural, although now there are commuters coming in. We're seeing a change from farms and small acreage farms with 4-H -- although there's still a lot of that -- to subdivisions with beautiful homes on them. The population base now includes high-income commuters."

Community Education has changed with the community. "For the first 8 or 9 years," said Becky Cramer, Community Education Director, "it was the grass-roots concept of education and leisure using local resources and a lot of volunteerism. Very little money was changing hands. But the needs of the community changed. Women were going back to work; this was no longer a farming, homesteading community. So Community Education is trying to keep up. For example, the child-care program is definitely the biggest endeavor we've had since I've been here, and it's designed to meet a community need. In a rural district, you have to go for the primary goal, the greatest need, because of limited resources. At first, the community school advisory council was worried about how much of my time would go to the child-care and preschool programs. But now they have to admit that if you determine the community needs, this is a need, and that they should get behind it."

The shift in population is also beginning to affect the parenting program. "One of the problems with the traditional parenting program," said Cornelius, "is that with parents going back to work, it's hard to meet their needs as well as the needs of the stay-at-home moms -- Ridgefield still has a lot of stay-at-home moms. We need to have a lot of flexibility to accommodate the working parents so they can participate."

Program History

With no state funding for Community Education in Washington, local programs often collaborate with other organizations. The Parent Participation Preschool is offered through Community Education in Ridgefield, but is part of the larger Parent Education department at Clark College in nearby Vancouver. Laurie Cornelius, one of the four core teachers in the Clark program, explained that "Clark College has had a program like this since World War II. We have a large center on campus. But people like to have programs in the areas where they live.

"We started the Ridgefield program in a church, but then the school district had space because of low enrollment. The current program is under the umbrella of Community Education -- I'm hired by Clark College, but go out to Ridgefield to work. Community Education collects the money, and gets the participants into the program."

Although the program is part of Clark College, the Ridgefield community has had input from the beginning. "When I was hired to do the program," said Cornelius, "Clark College narrowed the candidates down to three, and then sent us out to Ridgefield Community Education, who then made the choice. People don't even relate the program to Clark College. They think of it as their program, as the Ridgefield program."

In addition to the Parent Participation Preschool, Community Education has recently started a child-care program, which is housed next door to the preschool.

Program Goals

The Parent Participation Preschool seeks to involve parents in their children's education; and provide early childhood education for children. Parents determine developmental goals for themselves and their children; acquire skills in child guidance and parenting; exchange knowledge and discuss mutual concerns with other parents and teachers; and review current information on child development and parenting.

Program Characteristics

Services

The preschool meets five days a week, thirty weeks a year. Parents participate in the preschool a minimum of three hours, six times per quarter or ten-week session. Parent education classes meet four times per college quarter. "Most parents take the class credit/no credit," said Cornelius. "I don't require the parents to do the paperwork, but I do require the reading, or if they miss the meeting, they can do the paperwork as a make-up. But it's hard. They have a lot to handle. We also provide workshops and speakers. The parents pick out which ones they want to attend, but part of the program is coming to Clark College for the workshops." The program offers family events, holiday parties, a library, and a newsletter.

Cornelius outlined some of the ways the program has evolved. "I used to do my own home visits, but now with my other classes at Clark and the program in Ridgefield, I've got 58 families under me, which is way too many to do regular home visits. I still do occasional home visits.

"One event I've added at Ridgefield that is now a tradition is a moms-only weekend beach retreat. It meets their needs of getting away from the family and gives them a chance after the program to assess what direction they want to go in as parents and as women."

In a new program, the preschool is now working with special education children and their parents. In that program, Cornelius explained, the preschool is "mainstreaming special education children into our classroom. Ridgefield contracts out to ESD [Educational Service District] 112. We do some home schooling for them, and the ESD provides funding for the kids with special education needs. The school district provides busing. It's a very exciting combination. We have four children per class. The ESD teacher works with me in the classroom two days a week and then works another 1/2 hour a week with them at home. The parents of the special-education children participate in the preschool.

Participants

In 1987-88, forty families participated in the program. "We have such a varied user group," said Cramer. "We have educator's wives, single parents, single fathers, professional two-worker families, parents working out of the home, some spouses who don't need to work, people who are destitute, on scholarship, whose education doesn't go beyond the eighth grade."

Cornelius felt that the parents the program was most effective at reaching were the "middle and upper-class parents who place a high value on education." Cramer agreed that the parents the program couldn't reach were the "people who can't afford the program. Laurie does have people pay in three installments, but our ratio of scholarship to paid is low."

The extensive parent involvement the program requires may account for Cornelius's feeling that one kind of family the program is not reaching is the "two-working-parent family. I've tried to figure things out for them. I've had grandparents coming in, or dads who work swing shifts working in the preschool and the moms taking the evening class."

Initial outreach for the program was difficult. "We had to work really hard at keeping parents in the program," said Cornelius, "and we always asked about other children they might know. We put posters up at churches; had a float with our kids in the July 4th parade for visibility; the local newspaper wrote articles about it. We sent out flyers, which we still do." Now the program is at the current capacity of its space. Cornelius attributes the steady growth to "word of mouth. The program is known, it's stable. So when someone moves in and asks what's available, we're there. Many come in because of a friend. We're also in the Community Education brochure, and because it's a small community people really look at the brochure. Clark College also does a mailing to every home in the county but we're harder to find in that one."

Cramer agreed that the brochure was valuable in such a small community. "This community has 3,200 people, which is advantageous for us, because they're a captive audience. We're virtually the only source of a certain kind of service, so people wait for our programs to come out. Community Education publishes a quarterly brochure that goes direct-mail to every home. We also put weekly inserts in local newspapers. The flyers we send with kids seem to make it home to the parents who are really concerned with the quality of their kids' lives."

In spite of the brochure, Cramer explained that "in Clark County, we have some problems with awareness of the scope of Community Education services, so the five coordinators of community schools have taken some money from fundraising for a marketing plan to raise public awareness." The parenting class is one that has no problem with public awareness: it has a waiting list.

"The parent education program was designed at Clark," Cornelius explained, "but I have a lot of leeway. We use the materials designed at Clark, but the use of the modules is left up to us. We take things from Active Parenting, STEP, PET, Dreikurs, a lot of books. That's a big part of our job - we're constantly getting new resources."

Parents determine the direction of the program, said Cornelius. "I tell the parents every year, they make the program. It's a fallacy to say the teacher does or the system does. I tell them they'll get out what they put in, and the more they put in, the more the children will benefit, the more everybody benefits.

"I put out a needs assessment at the beginning of the class. Some topics resurface again and again -- discipline, sibling rivalry. One thing parents love is units and themes. They love field trips, and the experimentation and creativity, which are the biggest parts of the program. I see myself as a facilitator. I find out the parents' needs, and bring in information, but then we do problem-solving in class. Ultimately, the parents choose what's appropriate for them. There are many healthy ways of parenting."

The preschool is non-academic, said Cornelius. "Parents, particularly first-time parents, feel a pressure for their children to excel academically. They're very anxious about when their children should do things. We do have a lot of 'marathon moms' as I call them, but we also have a lot of first-time moms who ask around to find out what's available and come to us. It's very helpful to them to receive information about development and behaviors, and also to 'see' the bulk of the children, to see what's a normal behavior at that age. Then they can say, 'Oh, I see, that's normal,' and then move on to deal with the behavior in a healthy manner.

"For the children, my philosophy of early education is hands-on, exploration and experimentation. It's important to make the room a safe place so all the children are willing to try new things. The more parents we have working in the class, the more activities we can have going. But we also use the classroom for appropriate modeling of behaviors. Then in the parenting classes, we can talk about it."

The new program for special education children modifies the children's curriculum. "With the ESD children, I do the curriculum planning, run the class, and the ESD teacher adapts what we're doing for her children."

Coordination with Public School Programs

Linkage between the preschool and the kindergarten program is not formal. "The people responsible for the preschool and the elementary curriculum have not worked hand in hand," said Cramer. "But we do use their Student Learning Objectives as personal goals for our developmental program for two-, three-, and four-year-olds."

The program tries to create a bridge from preschool to kindergarten, more for the parents than for the children. "The parents learn to be involved and assertive," said Cornelius. "We do a class on school readiness and on involvement with the school system. We even do some modeling and role playing. We talk about having different learning styles, and how that can cause conflict with the school system, and about positive ways of giving advice."

The community is small enough that the preschool can introduce parents to many aspects of their children's next academic experience. "We can have things like parent meetings with the superintendent of schools," said Cornelius, "and with the kindergarten teachers their children will have. I often visit with the kindergarten teachers and they come to me for information if they have concerns regarding a child I've had in the past."

Linkage to the Surrounding Community

Community Education in Washington has a tradition of bringing members of the community into the classroom, and the parenting classes are no exception. "Because the community is small," said Cornelius, "it's easy to involve the community a lot, by bringing them into the classroom. For example, the local fire department has come and done a class on CPR and first aid, but they've also talked about how the emergency system works in the community."

Community Education in Ridgefield makes referrals to other community programs for day-care and babysitting services. The preschool also provides information and referral in a number of other areas. "When children have behavioral problems," said Cramer, "we have them tested to see if they qualify for any state-funded programs. We have intervention on a contractual basis through the ESD -- the Educational Service District -- which provides all kinds of services to rural districts that can't afford to have their own speech therapists or staff psychologists, or preschool screening. Clark County and the City of Vancouver are working currently with the local health department to have kindergarten screening brought to us, and with the ESD to provide preschool screening."

Cornelius considers providing information about community resources "a large part of my job. With parenting, you can't find one organization to meed everybody's needs. The parents ultimately make the decision, but it's essential to find the information for them. I have to know who to call and say, I have a family that has to come see you. We find out about agencies through inservices. My director at Clark also sits on an incredible number of boards and is real visible. With that involvement comes contacts, so I can go to her to find out about the availability of services.

"One way I find out about problems is that each day, I give parents an evaluation form: two positive experiences I had today; something I had a problem with; suggestions for the teacher. It's anonymous, unless they want to put a name on it. They can take it home if they want to write more, and sometimes they'll put a problem down on that. By the winter quarter, they usually know me well enough and trust me enough to come to me with problems of divorce, or domestic violence that's closeted.

"With domestic violence, I refer into YWCA's Safe Choice program, and discuss the options with them of what's safe for them and their children. They can stay at Safe Choice for three weeks. They have support groups, they have counseling, doctors if someone needs looking at, attorneys if they decide to go that route. Once they're referred, the YWCA takes over and explains the cycle of violence to them. The Y tells them to stay in contact with one person they trust, and often that person is me, since I was the original referral. Sometimes they find other places to live, sometimes they come back.

"I have to be very careful to maintain professionalism because I'm so tied into the community, even though I don't live there. I make sure from the outset in the classes that I operate with complete confidentiality. I don't share what they tell me. I also want them to know I'm a resource person, not a counselor."

Funding Sources

The Parent Participation Preschool is supported by parent fees: $112 per quarter for three days a week; $88 for two. Community Education keeps the books. "The money for the parenting class comes in and goes right back to Clark College," Cramer explained. The program rents space from the school; Clark College provides the equipment, materials and staff. "Parent groups help with fundraising," said Cornelius, "so that we can fund partial scholarships."

Clark College also receives Family Life Education funds from the state based on parents' attendance. "I'm paid out of three different budgets," said Cornelius. "I get paid as faculty for the parent education classes. Then I'm paid differently for the parent groups at the preschool. I get a percentage of fees from the preschool, and a certain percentage from the state, but that comes out of two different funds."

Lessons from this Site

A Small, Supportive District

Cornelius perceived the size of the district as a distinct advantage to the program. "Because the school district is so small, I can talk directly to the secretary or the custodian or the principal to get things I need. My experience of larger districts is that they're more disjointed. Here we have less red tape. For example, we have one influential person on the school board who participated in the program as a grandparent. At one point, he got all the dads in the group and dads from other years together and built a playground for the preschool -- without any red tape."

Clark runs several other programs through Community Education, said Cornelius, "But Ridgefield is the only one that's strong. Some of the others have funding problems. In other cases, the Community Education coordinators don't have any background in early childhood education, so we've had some communication problems. And the school districts haven't been supportive, which is crucial. We've had cases where they're taking our rent and not fixing major problems with the space -- like no heating, for example.

"The key is school district support. Ridgefield is the only one that's bent over backwards to meet our needs. Once we started, the school district became very supportive. Not financially, but in terms of getting people in. The staff is real supportive. They send flyers out for us. They go to the administration, to the school board, and work in that direction for us. They also take care of the budgetary situation. They put out the advertising. They give us the use of the gym, and include us in special programs. I talk to the Community Education office all the time. When Community Education is doing an event for preschoolers, I send it out to our parents. So the parents are constantly getting information."

In a small district, the linkages are likely to be personal. One disadvantage Cornelius has experienced is the turnover of Community Education directors. Nevertheless, the support for the program has remained strong. "My impression when I arrived," said Cramer, "both from the community and the administration was that child-care and parenting education were a sacred cow. It was clearly valued. There was a waiting list for the classes, because of the quality of instruction. It was a strong program for a rural area, but it was strong in general. Even though we're cramped for space, this is something we'd be very reluctant to boot. We'll try to keep it at all costs."

That decision may not be far off. "The program has grown to the absolute capacity of the space," said Cornelius. "We've already added another section, and have been turning people away. We have one room that's in use five mornings a week. What's threatening is that with the subdivisions, enrollment in the school is going to go up." "We're not in competition for space right now," said Cramer, "but we'd be sticking our heads in the sand to say it's not coming. As enrollment in the elementary school increases, we may be in a pinch. There's talk of building another school if the enrollment in the younger grades goes up."

"When the school can no longer house us, we'll have a problem," said Cornelius. "But the ESD, Community Education, and the school district strongly identify with the program, and would put energy into solving the problem. Right now, the two kindergarten classes each have their own rooms, but the principal has said that before we would be bumped, he would have the kindergarten classes share a room, and split morning and afternoon. There might be a little conflict with day-care, since we're both under Community Education -- but the community feels strongly about the preschool, and the teachers do, too."

Relationship to K-12

One potential source of friction in the community is the perception that the preschool program is competing for resources with K-12. Some parents have voiced concerns, said Cramer. "If their own kids are older and out of the program, parents want to know why the school district is providing a preschool."

The issue is one that plagues Community Education as a whole. "There's a sense of competition for public funds: why are they paying me when 'We could finance another teacher?' The local school board is behind us. But now the pillars of the community are waving Community Education flags, which has helped us survive cuts. We're doing a good job -- we look at our evaluations.

"We need to do more to integrate with the K-12 program. A few years ago, I had to struggle to arrange a career day at the high school. Thirty-three civic leaders came to represent their professions. But that's the kind of thing we can do. I want teachers to feel we can help them do what they're here for -- educate.

"I've had my consciousness raised. If Community Education is going to be seen as necessary in the school district, we're going to have to better serve educators and teachers. Pleasing your constituents is necessary, but you need cohesive support from the schools, so you don't have to feel like you have to back up to the pay window, that you always have to prove yourself. A good Community Education program helps to promote levies, our support for them is irrefutable. Since I've been here, the Community Education director has become more responsible for public relations -- I'm responsible for the school newsletter. I've also helped to write the levy literature whenever we're trying to pass a levy. As dollars tighten, we've all absorbed more responsibilities. But we also have to do more to help educators with basic education, do things they don't have the time or resources to do."

One way Cramer would like to integrate Community Education and the K-12 curriculum involves the child-care and preschool programs. "I'd like to see Community Education, in cooperation with the high school, develop a childhood education section at the high school. I'd work with the principal to do that -- the students would help us man the day care and child care and get credit as part of the life skills curriculum."

Location in the Schools

Cramer felt that it was "extremely beneficial to be housed with the kindergarten and elementary school, because we bridge the gap that way between preschool and school. Parents get a chance to network with parents of school-age children."

The location, added Cornelius, "gives us very high visibility in the community. People who are new to the community and see us in the school and think this is the program to go to because we're in the school. We have the school district teachers' kids, the principal's kids. That gives us familiarity and support."

The advantage for the school, said Cornelius, is the extensive experience parents have had working in the classroom. "The two kindergarten teachers always want to split our preschool moms between them because they work so well in the classroom and know how to relate to kids."

Another informal advantage to the school is the availability of the preschool's resources. "This school district has real funding problems," said Cornelius. "I share equipment and supplies -- this is just on a personal level. It's a poor district, and Clark College is not. So I say, just check with me to make sure we're not using it, and then go ahead."

Blending Universal and Targeted Services

The collaboration between the preschool and the Educational Services District to bring special education children into the program was the brainchild of the two teachers involved. "The two of us just said, 'Let's try this,'" Cornelius recalled. "We didn't really involve Clark or the ESD. So it was trial and error. This past year the ESD and Clark College have drawn up a formalized agreement with a signed contract that clearly specifies the responsibilities of each agency."

Bringing a group of children and parents with special needs into a program that does not otherwise target that population can raise a number of issues, and call for some creative solutions. "The parent involvement part of the program has been difficult," admitted Cornelius. "Parents of special education children are under a lot of stresses. It's hard to get them there and get them involved. We had one child in the program through the ESD where the mom was really unstable but the ESD wanted the child to stay in the program. We had a bit of a conflict of philosophy, because we need the parents to be involved, and we had to deal with the resentment of the other parents who were doing their share of the work. We've worked out an arrangement where we'll do parent education in the home, make special arrangements at school, and the ESD will hire someone to do that parent's work time in the classroom."

Cornelius also faced the issue of preparing both sets of parents and children for the mainstreaming. "We need to do more prep work ourselves, and with the students. We didn't give the kids enough prep time to get used to preschool, which was a mistake. And we needed to educate the entire class about what was going on. This spring we got healthy feedback. Everyone felt the program was valuable, and they made ***really*** good suggestions for future years."

Parent Support

The program stresses the involvement of parents both inside and outside the classroom. "We have a parent advisory board for all of the Clark programs," said Cornelius. "They are constantly evaluating and working on problems in the program. They discuss the overall program direction, how parents feel about what's being offered in the classroom. I always tell them, it's ***their*** program. All parents in the program fill out detailed program and teacher evaluations yearly."

Initially, said Cornelius, many parents "don't feel they're coming in for parent education. They feel this is just something they *have* to do for their children to be in the preschool. By the end of the year, they say they've really changed their parenting styles in some ways -- of course, not all of them do change. There's so much involvement required in the program they're really glad summer's here.

"One surprise for the parents is the feeling of closeness to the other parents and the other children. They really celebrate the other children's growth like their own. They didn't anticipate the sense of closeness and community that comes out of it. At the beach retreat we really share, and become a support group for each other. Many 'best friend' situations come out of the class. First-time mothers are fairly isolated in a rural area, and they come out and meet other moms with similar values about education. They have reunions."

In addition to a sense of community, some mothers get a new professional direction from the program. "Some parents who work in the classroom say, 'I really like this,' and go back to school, and then come back and take the parent education class for a grade."

According to Cornelius, "We're generally cheaper than the private preschool," but the program is still fee-supported, which makes it difficult for parents who cannot afford to make some form of contribution.

"It's an ongoing dilemma, as it is for the literacy programs," said Cramer. "The people who are really hurting often don't know the service is available: the people on public assistance, or abandoned by their spouse, or in financial trouble, or have temper-control problems -- how do you reach these people? We might use the contractual school psychologist to get at the parents we're not reaching."

At-risk families may require some basic services, like transportation, in order to be able to participate. The ESD is providing transportation for families of special education children, but if a family is "poverty stricken and they have no transportation, the location can be a problem," said Cornelius. "We had one family this past where the mom was very involved, but had no transportation. The child was ready to enter kindergarten, but the district recommended a year of preschool. One of the parents volunteered to bring mom and child to and from the preschool for the entire year."

The problem is not only how to reach at-risk families but how to serve them once they are in the program. One issue is having classes available when parents can attend. "I'd like to add a dimension to accommodate shift workers or evening classes," said Cramer. Another issue is how much time parents can contribute to the preschool itself. Cornelius currently tries to tailor the program to what each parent is able to contribute. For the dual-worker family, or a family under other stresses, the program may ask more than the family can give. Although drop-outs from the program are rare, some parents do leave because they are no longer able to commit either the time or the money the program requires. "They may leave for financial reasons if the scholarship fund is depleted. Or if a parent doesn't put in the work, I drop them -- I have to take someone from the waiting list. They may have a baby at home, or find it's more than they can handle. We also have a program called 'We Care' at Clark for high-risk families, but again, transportation and distance create barriers."

Unstable Funding

"We're in a real predicament with Clark funding," said Cornelius. "All community college funding is in dire straits. The legislature is allocating more to the University of Washington and four-year colleges, while cutting community college budgets. They also want our program to be self-supporting. What's difficult is that we set a minimum class size and a maximum class size, and to be self-supporting, we'd need *at least* what we consider the maximum class size. But I won't take more. The room won't take more."

Funding constraints have affected the structure of the program. "Because of funding, we used to have six parent meetings at the preschool per ten-week quarter, and now we only have three. I've found that means I have problems getting parents involved. It's just not enough contact. I'm now struggling with that issue.

"Our program is undergoing some other structural changes, and although still very new, most agree that the changes have been positive. Each class will now have two teachers, and in the case of Ridgefield, three. The children's teacher will be responsible for planning and carrying out the children's curriculum. The parent educator will be responsible for conducting the parenting classes, handling registration and related paperwork, and providing support and assistance to the child's teacher and parents in the classroom. The ESD teacher will be responsible for adapting the curriculum to meet the special needs of the children who have been mainstreamed into the classroom. In the past, the parent classes met at night, led by the teacher of the children's class. This year, the parenting meetings and classes will take place during the day, at the same time as the children's classes, but in different rooms."

Under the 1988-89 arrangement, funds for the classes, equipment, and salary for the children's teacher will be fee-generated. At Ridgefield, five dollars per parent per quarter will go towards supplies and equipment. Teachers will bring all consumable supplies from Clark College to Ridgefield; funding will come from Clark College's Parent Education operating budget. Funding for the parent educators on the Clark faculty, for the program manager, educational materials and printing costs will come from state monies.

Dunbar, West Virginia

Community Education & Family Support and Education: "The service delivery is very smooth, because the Community Education philosophy blends very well with the Head Start philosophy. They're both grass-roots programs -- a lot of it is the body language, how you greet people, how you treat them as people, and make them feel it's their facility. That's in the name -- community."

Linda DuVall, Education Specialist

Community Education in West Virginia

Community Education in West Virginia has its roots in Elsie Clapp's work in Arthurdale in 1934. Clapp was a New Yorker, a member of the progressive education movement, who came to West Virginia after founding a community school in Kentucky. The community school she founded in Arthurdale was funded by a federal relief project for West Virginia miners.

Although West Virginia has had enabling legislation since 1978, Community Education receives no state funding. Nancy J. Ross, director of the Shawnee Community Education Center, explained that the plight of Community Education reflects the plight of the state as a whole: "Right now the state owes the fifty-five county school systems $131 million by July 1 in uncollected taxes. The state is almost bankrupt. We're like a third-world country. Being near the capital, I'm in one of the more prosperous areas, so I won't feel the effects for a while, like the outlying counties. John F. Kennedy came through here and said if he could win West Virginia he would come back to help, and he was one of the few who did help. We've gone rapidly downhill since then. We've got a decline in all resources, except the natural ones, like the trees and coal. We pray a lot, but after you pray, you have to hustle. We still maintain hope for our future."

Program Setting

"West Virginia is suffering a brain drain," said Ross. "The ones with the college degrees leave, and the ones who can't find jobs come back. We're 50th in the nation in college graduates and 50th in working women. We've got 850,000 people in West Virginia with no high-school diploma, and we can't attract business or industry. We're also not bringing in federal money. All counties in this state qualify for assistance, but Washington doesn't pump in the money the way they do to inner cities. You hear about the inner city, and minorities, and the handicapped.You don't hear a lot about rural poverty. All over West Virginia, the mountains isolate us -- this is rural poverty."

Nancy Ross describes her area as "rurban." "We're not in the city, but it's not rural either, no cows. I'm looking out my window right now at a trailer court and a bar. And it's not suburbia, either. We're a small community outside the state capital, but you don't have to go very far to hit dirt roads.

"Right around here you have unskilled labor. One thing I have to say is that I'm tired of hearing that because people are low-income they are ignorant. There's enormous creativity here, and these people have survived a lot. They want to learn. There's a commitment to young people and the elderly here which is partly cultural. We're also a college community, the center of black academia in this area, which affects us to some degree, because it means there's concern about intellectual pursuits in the community."

Nancy Ross mapped out the territorial divisions surrounding the Shawnee Community Education Center: "We have what we call the 'Hillers' and the 'Creekers.' The Hillers have more money, they're the nouveau black middle class, the professionals, who've made some money and moved up to the hill. The Creekers are the ones with less money. Over a decade ago, the area we're in used to be called the 'Bad

Bottom' because it was flat bottom land and the perception was that the people in it were bad. The children of the college people or the Hillers weren't allowed to walk through here, let alone date here.

"The Shawnee Community Center was originally a school building that was closed and the black children were bused to three white schools to achieve integration. There was a public meeting to decide what to do with the building. They notified everyone about the meeting in writing, and on the radio. It was ninety degree heat and they were hotter because they were angry. We had a lot of people in the community who wanted to keep the school building open, including some lawyers who negotiated for Community Education as part of the trade for integration." The community is ninety percent black; ten percent white.

Program Goals

The philosophy of Head Start is that each child is an individual and progresses at his or her own pace. The goal is to meet the needs of each child and design a program appropriate to the child's developmental level. For parents, the goal is to support the children's Head Start program.

Program History

Just as the community lobbied to keep the building open as a community center, the community lobbied to bring Head Start to the Shawnee Center. Nancy Ross explained that "we have Head Start and parent involvement here because the community wanted it. Originally, our school system didn't know if Head Start should be here, because until then we only had Head Start in regular school buildings. It's a rather unique situation, since we're a community center owned, operated and maintained by the Board of Education. There was a school principal who was willing to have Head Start, but it would have meant busing these kids, who are mostly black, miles to an all-white neighborhood. I objected. We had the space, and the children and parents could walk. It just was very logical to me. There was a huge meeting, and a lot of arguing. The school bureaucracy didn't know if I could have Head Start here because my title wasn't 'school principal.'"

Linda DuVall, Head Start's Education Specialist for the county, outlined the procedure. "We determine Head Start sites on the basis of need. Two years before we started Head Start at Shawnee, Nancy Ross already had day-care going, and the community said it wanted Head Start. Nancy was very anxious to have us there, and was wielding political pressure to get us. Schools have to take us, but given the flexibility, I'd much rather go where we're wanted. Other rural sites were available, but the decision was based on transportation and the number of eligible children. We started collecting data to see how big a population we had. I wrote a one-year expansion proposal, but the population shifted, so we were able to make it a permanent site. Unless of course the population shifts again, but it's a pretty good feeder area -- there's low-income housing being built there even now, so the need might even increase."

Program Characteristics

Services

The children's classes meet four days a week, one in the morning, and one in the afternoon. In addition, staff conduct home visits. Parents meet monthly in groups and work individually in the classroom. The average parent at Shawnee Head Start spends thirty-three hours during each forty-week session working in the classroom with the child, making a toy or activity at home for the child to use in class, or attending parent meetings.

Participants

In 1987-88, Shawnee Head Start served forty-three three- and four-year-olds and their parents, primarily mothers. DuVall explained that "parent involvement isn't mandated -- we're not allowed to do that

-- but we try to make them think it is. It would be ideal to say that all parents were involved, but they are all involved to some degree. For example, at some locations I have attendance problems, but not at Shawnee. I think the parents have made the commitment that this is important, and they get their kids there." She also indicated that the "convenience of the location to the college means that a lot of parents are taking courses -- Welfare is giving them grants to study -- or getting jobs, so it makes it hard for them to be involved with Head Start." Parent involvement at Shawnee Head Start ranks in the top twenty-five per cent in the county.

County-wide, said DuVall, to recruit, "We have doctors, clinics, and other parents refer parents to us; we put information in newspapers, posters in grocery stores, wherever we can; we have exhibits at malls with free screening and we get children that way. But a good half of the people come to us by word of mouth. You find out best from someone you know. We also go out cold turkey and beat the bushes. High-risk families trust a face. They might tell you no on the phone, or to a letter or maybe they don't have a phone or can't read. I hate to say it, but we don't have all the people we need to go out to all the families."

"Word of mouth is the way to go in a small town," said Ross. "People hear someone talk about a problem and they'll say, 'Go over to Shawnee, they'll help you.' Word of mouth travels faster than anything. A lot of these people aren't reading everyday, but relative tells relative."

The geography of the area poses certain challenges to recruiting. "We have a few hollows," said Ross, "and it's hard to reach children who've never been out of the hollow. Head Start's central office has social workers who make home visits in the beginning to help, to tell the mother it's okay for the three- or four-year-old to leave the hollow, that the mother can come with the child, that it's okay to be in a building and not in front of the soap opera. Transportation is difficult, too. Where we are, you can drive many miles for a few parents. The roads are bad. But the school bus brings the children, so at least we don't have to worry about that for them."

West Virginia's harsh economic climate creates a transient population that Ross finds difficult to reach. Linda DuVall finds that families who move within the state usually turn up in another Head Start program. "But there are always the ones," she added, "who disappear after a weekend or a holiday and just vanish. Usually they're the highest risk families. Looking back, you know you should have seen the red flags."

Curriculum

Head Start mandates minimum performance standards, including a physical exam a certain number of weeks after enrollment, and dental care. Beyond that, each program has flexibility. The county-wide Head Start program has copyrighted its own curriculum, which each classroom can modify. Each Head Start classroom in the county has access to a computer with a Sesame Street touchboard and matching games for colors and numbers. "If the pre-kindergarten children show some interest," said DuVall, "we let them work in that area in May and June so they have a little bit of computer literacy."

The parents' curriculum depends on parents' interests. DuVall explained: "It might be the Bowdin method, which are short, ten-minute films, followed by a discussion, which comes with a book. It might be a nursery-rhyme project, or a craft project, or an AIDS workshop, whatever they'd like to have -- we bring out the nurse, if that's what they ask us for." Nancy Ross gave a sample range of activities: "We teach them how to work with their children at home, things they can do like counting the silverware together; and we help them increase their self-concept, how to use make-up, whatever they want to learn to improve their self-image. The parent meetings are a lot of fun -- I go, not because I have to, but because they're fun."

Coordination with Public School Programs

Linda DuVall participates in a school-wide inter-departmental group "where I try to learn about the goals and direction of the schools and filter it down to our Head Start classrooms." Some turf issues do arise. "For example, we work closely with special education, and that raises intervention issues -- they get to feeling 'This is our child.' But I consider that normal any time you coordinate and use different agency monies. It hasn't had any drastic effects."

Linkage to the Surrounding Community

If any family at Shawnee is having difficulties, Nancy Ross considers it "the responsibility of Community Education to find a resource to help. For example, no one leaves here hungry. We have a food bank, and do the commodities here -- you know, Reagan's great cheese give-away -- nobody would go away from here hungry, ever. Ever. I know I'm probably breaking a lot of rules because I don't ask them their income if they're hungry. If they're hungry, I give them food and figure I can work it out later. I'll take families to the Human Services Office. I've gotten them teeth, glasses, whatever help they need. We'll find somebody to deal with alcohol problems, or Family Services. I'll drive them there myself. People know that, by word of mouth."

In order to get the members of the community what they need, Nancy Ross works with a range of agencies and organizations. "One thing about agency cooperation is that the agencies know I will give them anything they ask. I'll always be at the hearings to support them. That means it's hard to turn me down when I come around. Community Educators are good beggars. I beg, borrow, collaborate, whatever it takes. For example, with our County Health Director, I helped him with some things he wanted and then reminded him that we had no clinic here, so now, as of the next fiscal year, we will have a well-baby clinic, immunization, someone working with teens.

"The Community Action Agency has been very supportive in a decade of budgets up and budgets down, providing meals. The Public Library has rotated books so that we could have an outreach library. The Parks and Recreation Department has always been good to us. We share a playground coordinator, and they use our building when it rains. The Red Cross has run flu clinics here. It's hard to get health services out in the field, because you have professionals who don't want to go far from their facilities and you need equipment. We have good cooperation with James Produce, where we buy all the food for the school program. We honor their employees as employee of the month, making a real school-business partnership. The Employee Training program at DHS provides us with summer workers -- I'm on their advisory board. Sears Roebuck has given us $5,000 worth of toys over the years."

Funding Sources

The budget for Shawnee Head Start in 1987-88 was $57,796. Ninety percent of Head Start funds are federal; nine percent comes from the Multi-CAP agency; one per cent from grants. The program receives facilities, materials, equipment, staff, and transportation in-kind from the schools. The County Board of Education pays for the salaries, utilities, and maintenance of Shawnee Community Center.

Lessons from this Site

Community Demand, Community Ownership

Shawnee exists because of the determination of the community it serves, and its existence has created a sense of community in the surrounding area. With Shawnee, Ross created twenty-five jobs, and filled them from the community. "We've dramatically changed the immediate neighborhood," said Ross. "Before, there was little sense of pride. The college area had the intellectuals, and the Hill had money, but

we had little. Now we have the Center, and the pre-school. Now we have children, both black and white, coming through all the time. We have good relations, and there's a sense of pride because people are coming here for something. People take some pride now in mowing their lawns and clearing their garbage."

The sense of pride and local ownership extends to the Head Start program. Ross commented, "Somehow I'm always shocked at how much we learn from each other. One parent will say, 'I know someone who knows someone who can get you a swing set.' Once you involve them, and get them to feel ownership, they feel they should contribute. So the network just gets bigger. People only give me more than I anticipated. I just don't understand principals who want to lock the doors at five o'clock."

The whole community takes an active role in Head Start. At Shawnee, Head Start is a three-generational program. Linda DuVall commented that "Shawnee is the only Head Start program that has senior citizens volunteering. You don't get that in an elementary-school setting. The senior citizens' room is right across the hall from the Head Start room, so some senior citizens come as visitors, some rock the children and listen to them. The senior citizens made doll clothes for all the children's dolls. There are always all kinds of bodies going in and out, which is something you don't find elsewhere. I'd love to see it in other programs, but then I don't run the school system."

Linda DuVall underscored the fact that parental involvement may begin with Head Start, but it doesn't end there. "One thing about Head Start that goes with the Community Education philosophy is that parents can stay involved after their children leave Head Start. We've got a parent who is a community representative while her child is in kindergarten. And that's part of the Community Education philosophy -- you never cut someone off from the program. They're always involved, if they want to be. A lot of PTA presidents used to be in the Head Start leadership. The carry over is high -- if parents emerge as leaders in Head Start, they tend to stay involved."

A Personal Network Takes Time

DuVall underlined the importance of working with other agencies, not only to avoid duplication, but also to provide a support system for the people involved in working with high-risk families. She gave the example of a sexual abuse case: "We worked with the Shawnee Hills Mental Health Center, and checked to make sure we weren't all going into the family, and we had a support system for each other to make sure we didn't crack up."

In a state with as little financial stability as West Virginia, said Ross, "Linkage is mandatory. We can't carry it all on our shoulders, no-one can. The resources in public education and public agencies are just getting smaller. If community involvement is the soul of community education, agency involvement is the heartbeat. I have to say that if you're concerned about turf, you're in serious trouble in this business. I've never been in twelve years, and I have to say I don't understand it."

Nancy Ross attributed part of her success to the fact that "I don't work with agencies. I work with individuals. I have a little blue book. In the beginning, I had to go over to each agency and make contact. I always make some personal contact."

Personal linkages can suffer if an organization has a high turnover rate, but while other programs report difficulties because of staff turnover, DuVall commented that "at Shawnee, we've had a constant administrator, and I've been the administrator at Head Start all along, so it's been very smooth."

DuVall credited Ross's position in the community with giving the Head Start program a distinct advantage in recruiting families. "In the poor communities, the word passes real fast. When you have a good, helping attitude, a positive attitude about helping people, the word gets around, and Nancy has that. If she has to go to a bank herself, she won't stop until she's got a family what it needs."

Shawnee is a center for basic services in the community, which gives Ross an opportunity to recruit. "Some people," she said, "come to Shawnee because they like to eat. They like the idea of food, so I feed them. Then once I get them in, I go up and down the halls with my notebook, and take them out of the food line and say, 'You look like your child is three years old, why isn't he in Head Start?' Or I sign them up for GED.

"Or we get them through their grandmother. One thing in this community -- you always do what your grandmother tells you. We have a very low rate of vandalism here at Shawnee, because we have grandmothers here in the senior citizens' program, and you don't want to rip off your grandmother's t.v. or your little brother's toys. One senior citizen was walking along the road and saw two young children with their mother in front of a trailer, and asked the mother why her children weren't at Head Start. 'They belong at Head Start,' she told her. There's a large base of support in the community.

"There are also opinion leaders, people in the community who people seek out if they need advice. It's not like in the books, not necessarily the doctor or the lawyer. Titles don't mean much here, but what you do for other people does."

Nancy Ross is also sensitive to racial issues, which can be critical in recruiting. Describing the opening of Shawnee, Ross recalled that "it was rather interesting when I arrived with my white self into this heated minority community -- there wasn't a lot of joy. But that's changed drastically, and I have to say honestly I think it's because of my leadership style. I've worked in many situations, including with Mexican-Americans in the sugar beet fields, and I've come to understand a lot about majority/minority relations."

Two-Generational Education

Nancy Ross uses other services at Shawnee to bring parents to Head Start and uses Head Start to involve parents in other programs available at the Community Center. "Once we get them in here, we can educate them. West Virginia has a very high illiteracy rate, and we have a GED program for them. We can give them a free education so that they can get their high-school diploma by the time their child gets one."

Linda DuVall's perspective, the proximity of classes for adults is an advantage. "Shawnee also has the computer room, which is open 12-14 hours a day. A lot of parents get involved with education or business training, because they can do it while the child is sitting in the Head Start classroom, they just walk down the hall. One thing that's been added is the JTPA (Job Training Partnership Act) program, which a lot of Head Start parents are involved with. We've even had a parent from a rural area placed at Shawnee to get training as a day-care provider. She was the president of the policy group in her area and wanted to do more, and now she's a Head Start leader."

Using Community Resources to Enhance the Program

Linda DuVall said that one "advantage of being in Community Education is in the name -- community. The director of Shawnee gets everyone in the target population involved: civic leaders,

businesses. She gets a lot of public relations that way that we couldn't get, and it makes for a high-quality program."

Nancy Ross pointed to the ways that "Community Education can tap the resources that Head Start doesn't have. I will know about things the teacher doesn't. The Community Center has have a van, which Head Start doesn't have, so we take the kids on field trips. We can pull from the total community to assist them with equipment, supplies, field trips, whatever they need to enhance their education."

Working on the Periphery of the School System

"At first," said Ross, "the school system kind of forgot we existed. I remember we were even left out of the school directory. Now we are in the directory. They've finally recognized us." Ross felt, however, that even in a K-12 setting, Community Education is often an outsider. "In most cases, the community education coordinator is working for a school principal and is part of the secondary school staff. The rest of the staff say, 'Oh, the community education coordinator is out in the community again!' They don't know what to make of us -- is the community education coordinator administration? No. Support staff? No. Service staff? No. The community educator is usually the most flexible person in the building, and so is treated differently.

"When positive things happen, I have a good rapport with the newspaper and get in print, so the school system looks good. When controversial issues come up, I stay low-profile. I believe I have a very good rapport with most people at the central office; they have a 'healthy respect' for me. I maintain a careful balance between dependence and independence -- kind of like a marriage. I have to work at it every day."

Although location outside a traditional K-12 school is unusual for Head Start, Linda DuVall has found that a Community Center has the kind of flexibility it takes to serve high-risk families. "I think there was a lot less tension bringing Head Start to Shawnee than to some other sites, because of the Community Education philosophy. Unlike principals, who are not used to having concentrations of high-risk families in the building, if there's a crisis, the Community Center can handle it. They already had day care and were used to having family emergencies. Some principals can make you think it's their school. I've got some good principals, don't get me wrong. But with a school-based Head Start program and federal guidelines, it takes a lot of blending of state and county regulations and acceptance of change."

Ross concluded that the periphery of the school system was often a good place for innovation. She can experiment with programs that other schools shy away from; once her programs take off, other schools often follow suit. "Our programs are always so different from the regular programs. They say, 'Nancy can do that, but we couldn't do that in our school.' That isn't true, of course, but it means that they don't want to take the risk. In many cases, we have paved the way for other schools to reach out to the community."

Figures

1. History of Community Education and ECFE in Minnesota

2. Statewide and Local Organization of ECFE

3. ECFE Legislation

Figure I: History of Community Education and ECFE in Minnesota

Fiscal Year

1966 Jerome Hughes (Democratic Farmer-Laborer Party) is elected to Minnesota Senate and joins Education Committee.

1971 Legislature creates Council on Quality Education (CQE) when state school-finance reform measures passed that limits the amount local communities can raise for education through property taxes.

Hughes sponsors Community Education legislation that is enacted into law providing for a state director, authorizing $5,000 toward the salary of local coordinators in up to 67 districts, mandating a state community school advisory council, and requiring a local advisory council in each district to meet criteria for funding.

1972 58 districts reimbursed for Community Education. Center for Community Education established at College of St. Thomas. Minnesota CE Association is organized.

1973 DFL assumes majority in Senate; Hughes becomes Chairman of Education Committee (continues as Chair through 1982).

Hughes introduces first ECFE bill in Senate. Bill calls for full-state implementation (voluntary); funding at 1/10 per pupil unit from foundation formula. Bill is laid over until 1974.

Sixty-seven districts receive approval from the SDE for Community Education funding; additional legislation authorizes a local levy of $1.00 per capita for Community Education.

1974 Wendell Anderson (DFL) is elected Governor.

Hughes introduces second ECFE bill -- almost identical to 1973 bill; it passes Senate but fails in House, mainly due to vocal opposition from day care, Montessori, and private nursery schools which express concern about public schools becoming involved with programs for young children.

House and Senate reach agreement to develop a compromise to pilot the program with language to be written in Conference Committee with CQE drafted to implement the pilot; conference agreement approved with $230,000 appropriated for six locations to be funded by competitive grants. State ECFE advisory task force created that includes representation from early childhood and day care.

Community Education expands to 134 districts. Graduate programs in Community Education at St. Cloud and Mankato State Universities are approved.

1975 CQE chooses six program proposals from 43 RFP respondents to run in FY 1975. Most of the six programs not operational until January due to need to circulate applications, pass funding recommendations to State Board, negotiate budgets, and hire local staff.

Senate increases number of pilot programs to at least 10 for FY 1976 and FY 1977 with $500,000 appropriated for each year; Conference Committee approves with little policy discussion; some parent testimony.

Number of Community Education districts increases to 170. New legislation abolishes 1971 reimbursement and provides 50% matching aid to any district that establishes an advisory council and levies at least $1.00 per capita. The University of Minnesota graduate program for CE

approved. First single-state sponsored MCEA state conference held.

1976 Twelve pilot programs operating (5 continuing, 7 new).

256 districts offer Community Education. Two CE staff added to the SDE with federal funds.

1977 CQE shifts another program to ECFE funding bringing the number of pilot programs to 13.

Lieutenant Governor Rudy Perpich becomes Governor when Anderson appoints himself to vacant Senate seat.

Senate passes expansion of ECFE during regular session; House very cool in anticipation of later negotiations. House IR (Darrel Peterson and Arnie Carlson) write own ECFE bill, consulting with CQE staff; try to insert it into aids bill, but fail.

New legislation allows all districts to levy up to $2 dollars per capita for community education or the amount levied in 1976; fifty cents state match per capita based on district population remains the same.

Conference Committee approves increase to 22 ECFE sites at $854,000 per year as proposed by the Senate. Reflecting continued skepticism among House leadership, CQE required to conduct a study of policy issues and report back to education committees by early 1979.

1978 Independent Republican Albert Quie defeats incumbent Governor Rudy Perpich (DFL).

Eight new pilot programs bring total to 21.

New legislation allows districts to levy up to $2.00 per capita for Community Education. Approximately 275 districts have been designated Community Education districts.

1979 One new pilot program brings total number of ECFE pilots in operation to 22.

U.S. Government Accounting Office reviews pilots as part of effort to make recommendations to Congress to recycle remedial spending into prevention. Resulting report cites Minnesota for best state effort in preventive programming targeted at parents of very young children.

Legislature reviews ECFE policy study prepared by CQE during regular session; negotiates CQE recommendation to begin gradual expansion to 40 sites to 36. Legislature tables CQE recommendation to start development of a formula to which proven programs can shift from grants. ECFE legislation rewritten, establishing a special grant category for programs serving economically disadvantaged parents. No action on CQE request for $20,000 to begin long-term data collection effort. Appropriations are $1,650,000 for FY 1980 and $1,767,000 for FY 1981.

1980 Major CQE staff efforts directed at implementing gradual expansion to 36 ECFE pilot programs in 29 districts. CQE staffing complement at 6.0 FTE; one professional assigned to ECFE policy and research development; another assigned to grants management and local monitoring.

1981 Thirty-six ECFE pilot programs continue to operate.

CQE staff present 1979 policy study with minor revisions to legislative offices. Recommendations refined, especially on point of using formula funding with proven programs and need for long-term data base. Little discussion by Legislature; preoccupation with growing revenue crisis in state. Appropriations cut for upcoming biennium to $1,500,000 for FY 1982 and $1,275,000 for FY 1983. Legislature tables request for evaluation and research funds.

CQE and ECFE task force deliberate at length whether to absorb funding cuts by terminating programs or reducing grants; choose latter, absorbing cuts by exerting pressure on local staff to pursue fund-raising to weather crisis. Programs absorb cuts by reducing number of sessions, shortening staff hours, etc.

CQE staff resignations and personal leave granted; hiring freezes (3.5 of 6 positions filled).

1982 Rudy Perpich (DFL) elected Governor.

Number of CQE staff at 4.5 positions in fall of 1981; state ECFE specialist secured on contract; ECFE limited to one staff member after summer of 1982.

Little discussion of program in legislative session. Continued preoccupation with state revenue problems. Senate Aids approve language recommended by CQE to pilot formula and report back. Amendment dropped in Finance Committee. State budget cuts result in the FY 1983 ECFE appropriation being reduced to $1,157,577.

At July seminar, CQE and ECFE advisory task force renew commitment to seek formula funding for ECFE. Intense discussion since many members are new. Resolution passes with one abstention and is conveyed to SDE and State Board. Plan calls for use of foundation formula based upon participant hours converted into per pupil units in order to avoid need for new formula and keep program from becoming a categorical aid; includes mechanisms for quality control by CQE, piloting and refinement of formula, reporting to legislature, gradual implementation, and aggregation of long-term data. Back-up plan developed in case state revenue situation continues to be negative.

1983 Hughes becomes President of Minnesota Senate.

New legislation shifts funding and responsibility for ECFE programs to Community and Adult Education, changing funding basis from grants to per capita aid. $819,000 allocated to CQE for FY 1984 transition grants to be combined with Community Education per capita aid of $.25 in districts that have ECFE pilot programs. Other districts are encouraged to develop or expand ECFE programs, but may use the per capita aid for any other Community Education programs. In FY 1985, $.50 per capita aid will be only state aid for ECFE. CQE, with assistance of State Board, mandated to report on review of funding formulas to Legislature by early 1984.

1984 The number of pilot programs decreases from 36 to 34 in 29 districts due to merging of programs in two districts; an estimated 41 other ECFE programs operate via community education or vocational education funding. Internal working group from SDE studies funding options and prepares report to Legislature.

Hughes sponsors legislation that replaces the $.50 per capita aid in FY 1986 with an ECFE aid and levy formula established at 5% of the foundation formula allowance (per pupil unit formula for funding K-12 programs) times the number of children under age 5 in the district (guaranteed base of 150) -- legislation passes. Districts that had provided ECFE pilot programs in 1982-83 are guaranteed $11,000 for a program in 1984-85. Legislation also specifies program characteristics, accounting procedures, and requires teacher licensure for staff.

Guide for Developing Early Childhood Family Education (265 pages) written and disseminated to all school districts in Minnesota; contents draw heavily from experiences of pilot projects.

CQE's assistant coordinator for ECFE shifts to Community and Adult Education Section of SDE as the ECFE specialist.

Inter-agency Agreement for Early Childhood Intervention signed by Commissioners of Education, Health, and Human Services creating a state inter-agency early childhood intervention steering committee.

1985 Local districts allowed to levy up to .4 mill in October of 1984 for use in FY 1986, but no more than the maximum revenue as described above; 253 districts levy in October.

Approximately 70 districts have ECFE programs in operation--many more start planning and outreach.

Legislation adds expectant parents as a group that ECFE programs may serve and defines substantial parent involvement. Levy increases from .4 mill to .5 mill. for use in FY 1987. Proposed State Board of Education Rules regarding ECFE circulated for review and comment.

State ECFE specialist establishes regional in-service training network. One-credit introductory course developed for ECFE coordinators and providers. Post-secondary instructors offered training. Course sponsored by post-secondary institutions at various sites across state.

Teacher licensure task force recommends two new teacher licenses for ECFE staff to Minnesota Board of Teaching.

1986 Rudy Perpich re-elected as Governor.

Legislation adds adult handicapped programs to Community Education through a combination of local levy and state aid.

First year of ECFE implementation under statewide formula funding. Total state appropriation increases to $6,170,700, with total local levy generating $6,534,000. 253 out of 435 school districts offer ECFE services. Funding formula changed for FY 1987 from 5% of current foundation formula allowance to 5% of previous year's allowance.

279 Community Education districts levy for ECFE.

Legislature suspends duties and responsibilities of CQE; duties to be performed instead by Commissioner of Education through FY 1987.

1987 Approximately 300 districts offer ECFE. Total state appropriations increase to $6,028,600 with local levy generating $9,028,881. Round table discussion at Spring Hill with nationally known researchers on family support and education used to set focus of evaluation in anticipation of future funding for effort.

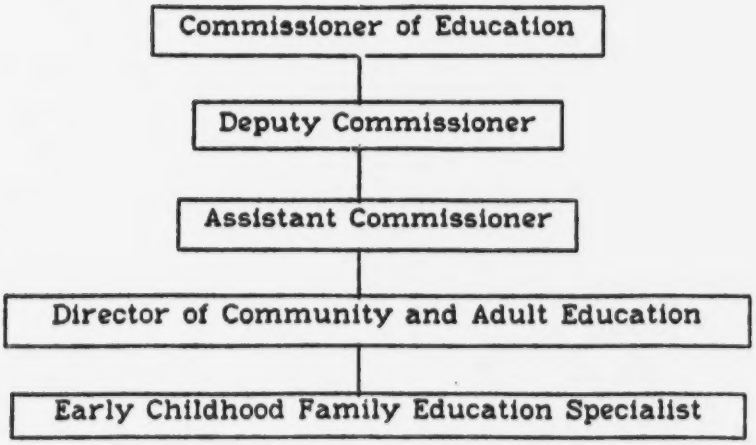
1988 Approximately 380 of 435 school districts are designated Community Education districts and are eligible to levy for ECFE. Total state appropriation increases to $7,539,867 with 290 districts levying for a total of $10,720,788; 310 districts currently offering ECFE services. (Approximately 20 districts are providing programs with carry-over funds from earlier years or through other sources.)

Local ECFE programs initiate use of standard participant data form in anticipation of follow-up evaluation studies once funding becomes available.

ECFE program is featured on CBS Sunday Morning and in the Community Education Journal. Statewide promotional materials are developed through a business-education partnership with advertising agency and made available to all local ECFE programs on a shared-cost basis.

MINNESOTA
Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE)

Statewide Organization



Sample Local Organization

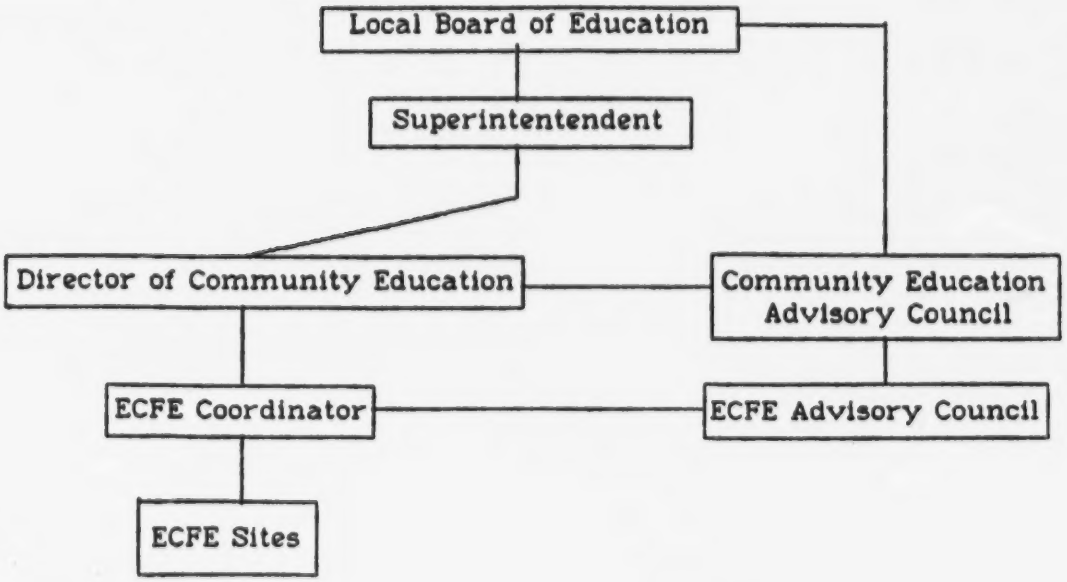


FIGURE 3: ECFE LEGISLATION

From Minnesota Statutes, 1987 Supplement

121.882 EARLY CHILDHOOD FAMILY EDUCATION PROGRAMS.

Subdivision 1. **Establishment.** A district that provides a community education program may establish an early childhood family education program. Two or more districts, each of which provides a community education program, may cooperate to jointly provide an early childhood family education program.

Subd. 2. **Program characteristics.** Early childhood family education programs are programs for children in the period of life from birth to kindergarten, for the parents of such children, and for expectant parents. The program may include the following:

(1) programs to educate parents about the physical, mental and emotional development of children;
(2) programs to enhance the skills of parents in providing for their children's learning and development;
(3) learning experiences for children and parents;
(4) activities designed to detect children's physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral problems that may cause learning problems;
(5) educational materials which may be borrowed for home use;
(6) information on related community resources; or
(7) other programs or activities.

The programs shall not include activities for children that do not require substantial involvement of the children's parents. The programs shall be reviewed periodically to assure the instruction and materials are not racially, culturally, or sexually biased. The programs shall encourage parents to be aware of practices that may affect equitable development of children.

Subd. 2a. **Substantial parental involvement.** The requirement of substantial parental involvement in subdivision 2 means that:

(a) parent must be physically present much of the time in classes with their children or be in concurrent classes;
(b) parenting education or family education must be an integral part of every early childhood family education program;
(c) early childhood family education appropriations must not be used for traditional day care or nursery school, or similar programs; and
(d) the form of parent involvement common to kindergarten, elementary school, or early childhood special education programs such as parent conferences, newsletters, and notes to parents do not qualify a program under subdivision 2.

Subd. 3. **Separate accounts.** The district shall maintain a separate account within the community education fund for money for early childhood family education programs.

Subd. 4. **Participants' fees.** A district may charge a reasonable fee but it shall waive the fee for a participant unable to pay.

Subd. 5. **Additional funding.** A district may receive funds from any governmental agency or private source.

Subd. 6. **Coordination.** A district is encouraged to coordinate the program with its special education and vocational education programs and with related services provided by other governmental agencies and nonprofit agencies.

Subd. 7. **District advisory councils.** The school board shall appoint an advisory council from the area in which the program is provided. A majority of the council shall be parents participating in the program. The council shall assist the board in developing, planning, and monitoring the early childhood family education program. The council shall report to the school board and the community education advisory council.

Subd. 8. **Teachers.** A school board shall employ necessary qualified teachers for its early childhood family education programs.

Subd. 9. **Assistance.** The department of education shall provide assistance to districts with programs described in this section.

Subd. 10. **Rules.** The state board of education may adopt rules about program facilities, staff, services, and procedures.

M.S. 275.125

Subdivision 8b. **Early childhood family education levy.** A district may levy for its early childhood family education program. The amount levied shall not exceed the lesser of

(a) .5 mill times the adjusted valuation of the district for the year proceeding the year the levy is certified; or
(b) the maximum revenue as defined in section 124.2711, subdivision 1, for the school year for which the levy is attributable.

124.2711 EARLY CHILDHOOD FAMILY EDUCATION AID.

Subdivision 1. **Definition of maximum revenue.** For fiscal year 1987 the "maximum revenue" for early childhood family education programs for a school year means the amount of revenue equal to the product of five percent of the foundation aid formula allowance for the prior school year, times the greater of (a) 150, or (b) the number of people under five years of age residing in the district on September 1 of the preceding school year. For fiscal year 1988 and each year thereafter, the "maximum revenue" for early

childhood family education programs for a school year means the amount of revenue derived by multiplying $84.50 times the greater of (a) 150, or (b) the number of people under five years of age residing in the district on September 1 of thee preceding school year.

Subd. 2. **Population.** For the purposes of subdivision 1, data reported to the department of education according to the provisions of section 120.095 may be used to determine the number of people under five years of age residing in the district. The commissioner, with the assistance of thee state demographer, shall review the number reported by any district operating an early childhood family education program. If requested, the district shall submit to the commissioner an explanation of its methods and other information necessary to document accuracy. Of the commissioner determines that the district had not provided sufficient documentation of accuracy, the commissioner may request the state demographer to prepare an estimate of the number of people under five years of age residing in the district and may use this estimate for the purposes of subdivision 1.

Subd. 3. **Aid.** If a district complies with the provisions of section 121.882, it shall receive early childhood family education aid equal to:

(a) the difference between the maximum revenue according to subdivision 1, and the permitted levy attributable to the same school year, according to section 275.125, subdivision 8b, times

(b) the ratio of the district's actual levy to its permitted levy attributable to the same school year, according to section 275,125, subdivision 8b.

Subd. 4. **Use of revenue restricted.** The proceeds of the aid authorized by this section and the levy authorized by section 275.125, subdivision 8b, shall be used only for early childhood family education programs.

TABLE 1: FUNDING HISTORY OF ECFE

MINNESOTA: ECFE UNDER CQE

Fiscal Year	Total Appropriation	Total Grants Awarded	Districts	Projects
1975	$ 230,000	$ 230,953	6	6
1976	500,000	420,475	11	12
1977	500,000	570,920	12	13
1978	854,000	712,127	18	21
1979	854,000	906,667	19	22
1980	1,650,000	1,668,602	29	36
1981	1,767,000	1,740,192	29	36
1982	1,500,000	1,480,645	29	36
1983	1,157,577	1,406,536	29	36
1984	1,028,000	1,169,162	29	34

NOTES:
1. The total grants awarded represents funding from CQE grants and does not include revenue districts received from other sources. For example, in FY 1980, it was estimated that pilot projects received an additional $663,581 from other sources.
2. Initial FY 1983 appropriation of $1,275,000 reduced due to state budget cuts.
3. In FY 1984, the total grants awarded figure represents $818,999 in CQE grants and $350,162 in $.25 per capita Community Education aid. Two of the 29 districts did not offer Community Education and therefore were not eligible for per capita aid.

ECFE UNDER COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Fiscal Year	Total Aid + Levy	Total Aid	Total Levy	Number of Districts
1985	$ 801,695	$ --	$ --	70
1986	12,704,700	6,170,700	6,534,000	253
1987	15,887,920	6,028,600	9,028,881	300
1988	18,260,655	7,539,867	10,720,788	310
1989	19,766,355	8,124,400	11,641,955	340

NOTES:
1. In FY 1985 revenue provided to districts for ECFE was in the form of grants and state aid.
2. Figures do not include revenue districts received from other sources for ECFE services including State vocational-technical aid, community education, fees, other federal grants or foundation funds.
3. Aid formula changed effective FY 1987 from 5 percent of current foundation formula allowance to 5 percent of previous years allowance.
4. Number of districts levying is slightly less than number providing ECFE each year due to programs operating with carry-over funds from earlier years or through other sources of funds.
5. Total aid represents 15 percent of the prior year's entitlement and 85 percent of the current year's entitlement.

MINNESOTA: TOTAL COMMUNITY AND ADULT EDUCATION AID
(does not include local levies)

Fiscal Year	Total Aid (including ECFE)	Total ECFE Aid
1984	$ 5,174,600	$ 330,162
1985	4,744,500	801,695
1986	9,017,800	6,170,700
1987	9,952,500	6,028,600
1988	13,559,900	7,539,867

NOTES:

1. FY 1984 ECFE Aid does not include grants awarded under CQE totaling $818,999.
2. ECFE aid formula changed effective FY 1987 from 5 percent of current foundation allowance to 5 percent of previous year's allowance.
3. Total aid represents 15 percent of the prior year's entitlement and 85 percent of the current year's entitlement.

TABLE 2: FUNDING FOR ECFE BY SITE

Site	TOTAL FY 1987 BUDGET	TOTAL FY 1988 BUDGET	Sources	Percentage of Total Community Education Expenditures (FY 1987)
Minneapolis	$800,000	$1,800,000	community levy (66%) state aid (33%) fees/charges (1%)	18%
St. Paul	$1,988,592	$2,137,391	community levy (48%) state aid (43%) other (8%)	38%
Duluth	$797,000	$842,880	state aid (76%) community levy (19%) grants (3%) fees/charges (1%)	45%
Bloomington/ Richfield	$455,300	$505,300	community levy (85%) fees/charges (10%) other (5%)	29%
District 196	$612,736	$706,027	state aid (52%) community levy (43%) fees/charges (8%)	45%
District 191	$172,000	$114,000	community levy (78%) state aid (17%) county funds and fees/charges (5%)	11%
District 77	$224,568	$262,584	community levy (47%) state aid (38%) other (10%) fees/charges (6%)	37%
Freshwater (Cooperative)	$146,137	$154,075	state aid (75%) community levy (25%)	41%
District 318	------	$140,000	community levy (78%) state aid (29%) fees/charges (1%)	48% (FY 1988)

TABLE 3: TYPES AND AMOUNTS OF ECFE SERVICES HELD IN FY 1987

Service	Minneapolis # hrs. %	St. Paul # hrs. %	Duluth # hrs. %	Bloomington # hrs. %	District 196 # hrs. %	District 191 # hrs. %	District 77 # hrs. %	F.W. Coop. # hrs. %	District 318 # hrs. %
Parent & Child Classes	2713 (92.9)	8681 (76.5)	2518 (42.7)	2184 (48.0)	2520 (90.7)	785 (65.6)	1444 (37.4)	1326 (97.8)	Did not
Parent Only Classes	9 (.3)	858 (7.6)	154 (2.6)	0	0	10 (.8)	6 (.2)	0	operate in FY
Special Events	135 (4.6)	446 (3.9)	877 (14.9)	109 (2.4)	238 (8.6)	22 (1.8)	10 (.3)	26 (1.9)	1987
Home Visits for Outreach	0	155 (1.4)	210 (3.6)	0	0	0	0	0	
Home Visits for Education	0	125 (1.1)	278 (4.7)	0	0	0	777 (20.1)	0	
Sibling Care	0	657 (5.8)	1418 (24.0)	2202 (48.4)	0	101 (8.4)	1620 (41.9)	0	
Health Screening	32 (1.1)	?	0	44 (1.0)	0	0	0	0	
Advisory Council	32 (1.1)	153 (1.3)	62 (1.1)	12 (<.1)	20 (.7)	0	8 (.2)	4 (.3)	
Other	0	272 (2.4)	383 (6.5)	0	0	279 (23.3)	0	0	
Total Hours	2921	11345	5899	4550	2778	1197	3865	1356	
Eligible Population Served (%)	8	17	13	38.7	Unavailable	16	33	36	

TYPES AND AMOUNTS OF ECFE SERVICES HELD IN FY 1988

Service	Minneapolis # hrs. %	St. Paul # hrs. %	Duluth # hrs. %	Bloomington # hrs. %	District 196 # hrs. %	District 191 # hrs. %	District 77 # hrs. %	F.W. Coop # hrs. %	District 318 # hrs. %
Parent & Child	4188 (77.5)	8690 (81.8)	3035 (61.9)	2433 (50.7)	2952 (89.5)	967 (61.1)	1567 (45.7)	1329 (88.7)	385 (73.1)
Parent Only	68 (1.3)	380 (3.6)	129 (2.6)	0	0	24 (1.5)	0	3 (.2)	0
Special Events	342 (6.3)	332 (3.1)	176 (3.6)	80 (1.7)	327 (9.9)	165 (10.4)	12 (.3)	29 (1.9)	44 (8.3)
Home Visits for Outreach	0	105 (1.0)	81 (1.7)	0	0	0	389 (11.3)	0	0
Home Visits for Education	719 (13.3)	68 (.6)	80 (1.6)	59 (1.2)	0	0	20 (.6)	0	0
Sibling Care	0	755 (7.1)	1257 (25.6)	2163 (45.1)	0	80 (5.1)	1433 (41.8)	0	0
Health Screening	36 (.6)	4 (<.1)	0	51 (1.1)	0	0	0	80 (5.3)	0
Advisory Council	52 (1.0)	152 (1.4)	70 (1.4)	14 (.3)	20 (.6)	15 (.9)	8 (.2)	9 (.6)	12 (2.3)
Other	0	141 (1.3)	77 (1.6)	0	0	331 (20.9)	0	48 (3.2)	86 (16.3)
Total Hours	5405	10627	4905	4800	3299	1582	3429	1498	527
Eligible Population Served (%)	22	18	27	26	36	19	37	60	15
Newsletter (# of issues)	8	4	3	8	10	10	6	1	5

Notes:

St. Paul: Services listed as "Other" include library resources, telephone calls, conferences, and group contacts for outreach.
Duluth: Activities as "Special Events" include community presentations by individual staff members.
Services listed as "Other" inlude provision of transportation and home visits by parent volunteers.
District 191: Services listed as "Other" primarily represent outreach to organizations/groups, including WIC.
F.W. Coop: Services listed as "Other" represent outreach at WIC.
District 318: Services listed as "Other" represent outreach at WIC, fairs, and toy demonstrations.

TABLE 4: DISTRICT AND ECFE ENROLLMENTS (1987-88)

District	Total District Enrollment	Percent Minority	# of Children Served in ECFE (birth to k)		# of Different Parents Served		Percent of Eligible Population Served (Classes & Special Events)	Percent Minority	Percent with Family Incomes < $20,000	Percent Single Parents	Percent Teen Parents
			Classes	Classes and Special Events	Classes	Classes and Special Events					
Minneapolis	38,763	42.6	1902	2231	2758	3508	22	31	66	38	11
St. Paul	31,624	36.7	3641	3953	2841	3707	18	29	40	13	2
Duluth	13,820	6.7	893	1470	929	2317	27	3	45	20	14
Bloomington & Richfield	12,194 4,516	6.9 9.4	1178	1507	943	1189	26	3	15	6	3
District 196	16,058	5.5	815	NA	815	NA	35.9	1.5	4.6	6	3
District 191	9,164	6.0	455	650	400	625	19	10	10	15	3
District 77	6,429	2.9	NA	1059	NA	706	37	0.5	NA	4	2
Freshwater Coop. (7 districts)	4,662	Av.: 1.6 Range:0-4.1	273	1124	369	662	60	0.5	75	7	4
District 318	4,781	4.3	194	259	150	225	15	NA	NA	8	5

Notes:

A class is defined as a series of two or more sessions on a specific topic.
The racial composition of the total population in Minneapolis and St. Paul is 14 percent and 26 percent minority respectively.
In the remaining sites, the percentage enrollment of minorities more closely parallels the community as a whole.

Sources of data:

Minnesota State Department of Education Statistics and ECFE annual reports submitted 7/15/88.
Family income data estimated by ECFE coordinators.

TABLE 5: EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND WAGES OF ECFE STAFF (1987-88)

District	Employment Status	Beginning Wages & Benefits	
		Coordinator	Early Childhood Tr. & Parent Educator
Minneapolis	Coordinator on admin. contract; lead teachers on master teacher contract; tutors (part-time, certified teachers) paid hourly, including time for preparation, staff development, and meetings. Coordinator has other duties.	$47,000/yr. (current for 48 wks.)	$20,324/yr.(Lead Teachers) $17.52/hr.(E.C.Teachers & Parent Educ)
St. Paul	Assistant director on admin. contract and staff on master tr. contract; some part-time staff paid hourly, including time for preparation (early childhood teachers only), meetings and inservice.	$52,466/yr. (current for 52 wks.)	$19,868/yr. $17.00/hr.(Parent Educ) $14.00/hr.(E.Childhood Tr)
Duluth	Coordinator on admin. contract and staff on master tr. contract; some part-time staff paid hourly, including time for preparation, meetings, and inservice. Coordinator has other duties.	$39,820/yr. (current for 44 wks.)	$18,540/yr. $13.62/hr.
Bloomington/ Richfield	Coordinator on admin. contract; other staff paid hourly, including time for preparation, meetings and inservice.	$32,000/yr. (current for 52 wks.)	$12.00/hr.
District 191	Coordinator on master admin. contract and also teaches part-time in program; other staff paid hourly, including time for preparation, meetings, and inservice. Coordinator has other duties.	$25,000/yr. (current for 52 wks.)	$11.50/hr.
District 196	Coordinator on supervisory contract and staff on master tr. contract; some part-time staff paid hourly, including time for preparation, meetings, and inservice.	$31,790/yr. (current for 52 wks. at .8 FTE)	$19,800/yr. $13.67/hr.
District 318	Coordinator and staff on master tr. contract. Coordinator has other duties. Staff paid hourly, including time for preparation, meetings, and inservice.	$27,000/yr. (current for 40 wks.)	$13.78/hr.
District 77	Staff on master contract. Staff paid on hourly basis, including preparation time.	$20,000 (current for 40 wks. at .75 FTE)	$12.69/hr.
Freshwater Coop.	Coordinator on contract; staff paid hourly, including time for preparation, meetings, and inservice. Coordinator has other duties.	$10,205 (current for 36 wks. at less than 1.0 FTE)	$13.00/hr.

TABLE 6: USE OF FACILITIES FOR ECFE ACTIVITIES (1987-88)

District	Public School K-12		Other Public School Buildings		Community-based Facilities	Church	Other
	Shared Rms.	Dedicated Rms.	Shared Rms.	Dedicated Rms.			
Minneapolis	x	x	x	x	x		x
St. Paul		x			x	x	x
Duluth		x		x	x	x	x
District 196	x				x	x	x
Bloom./Richfld.				x	x	x	x
District 77	x			x	x	x	
Freshwater Coop	x		x				
District 318	x				x	x	
District 191	x			x		x	x

Definitions:

1. Public School (K-12) refers to operating elementary, junior high or middle school, and high school buildings.
2. Other public school buildings include community education centers, district administrative offices having some programming spaces, or other specialized educational services (e.g., special education).
3. Community-based facilities refer to the YMCA, public health offices, community agencies/organizations, rental space in shopping centers or office buildings, public housing community centers, town halls, hospitals, or libraries.
4. Facilities listed as other include apartments, common areas of apartment complexes, or women's shelters.

TABLE 7: CURRENT APPROACHES TO ECFE PROGRAM EVALUATION AND MONITORING

Site	Surveys of Participant Satisfaction	Analysis of Participation Records	Survey of Community Needs	Participant Case Reviews
Minneapolis				
• Regional Centers	x	x		
• Special Education Component	x	x		x
• Family School & Premie	x	x	x	x
• Work & Family	x	x		
St. Paul	x	x		x
Duluth	x	x		
Bloomington/ Richfield	x	x	x	
District 196	x	x	x	
District 191	x	x		
District 77	x	x		
F.W. Coop	x	x		
District 318	x	x	x	

Note:

St. Paul is involved in two collaborative projects to reach and serve families who are considered at-risk. Each project had an outcome evaluation built into the proposal for funding.

Tables for Sites Across the U.S.

A. Funding for Family Support and Education by Site (1987-88)

B. Types of Family Support and Education Services Held in FY 1988

C. Family Support and Education Enrollments and Participant Characteristics (1987-1988)

D. Use of Facilities for Family Support and Education Activities (1987-88)

E. Approaches to Program Evaluation by Site (1987-88)

TABLE A: FUNDING FOR FAMILY SUPPORT AND EDUCATION BY SITE (1987-88)

PROGRAM CITY, STATE	SEPARATE FS&E BUDGET?	TOTAL FY1987 BUDGET	TOTAL FY1988 BUDGET	SOURCES (PERCENT)	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL CE EXPENDITURES FY 1987
Parent Involvement Program Guntersville, Alabama	Yes	$9,750	$9,750	NA	25.5
Parent Participation Preschool Ridgefield, Washington	No	--	$55,000	Fee (100)	0
Shawnee Head Start Dunbar, West Virginia	--	$55,000	$57,796	Federal (90) County (9) Grants (1)	23.1
Homemaking Consultant Program State College, Pennsylvania	Yes	$30,000	$100,000	Grants (50) District(40) Fee (10)	35.7
Parent & Family Life Education LaMesa, California	Yes	$200,000	$224,884	State (99) Fee (1)	4.4
STAR Parenting South Toms River, New Jersey	Yes	$10,370	$13,520	District(30) Federal (50) Fee (20)	
Herricks Community Center New Hyde Park, New York	No	NA	NA	Fee (100)	NA
Parents As Teachers Eureka, Missouri	Yes	$76,616	$109,100	State (94) District (6)	28.7
Amanda's Place Ft. Lauderdale, Florida	Yes	$62,000	$166,000	District(79) Grants (18) Donation (3)	1.2
Parent Growth Program Des Moines, Iowa	Yes	$142,395	$155,310	State (49) County (35) District(15) Grants (1)	7.8
Parent/Child Workshop Muskegon, Michigan	Yes	$315,000	$347,300	NA	24.5
New Parents as Teachers Memphis, Tennessee	Yes	$49,500	$20,000	Grants (100)	NA

Note:

Eureka, MO: Program is primarily state funded; many participants are also enrolled in fee-based classes offered by CE.

TABLE B: TYPES OF FAMILY SUPPORT AND EDUCATION SRVICES HELD IN FY 1988

Site	Parent & Child Classes	Parent Only Classes	Home Visits	Special Events	Health Screening	Newsletters	Advisory Council
Parent Involvement Program		x	x	x	x		x
Parent Participation Preschool	x	x	x	x		x	x
Shawnee Head Start	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Homemaking Consultant Program	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Parent & Family Life Education	x	x		x		x	
STAR Parenting	x	x		x		x	
Herricks Community Center	x	x		x			x
Parents As Teachers	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Amanda's Place	x	x		x		x	x
Parent Growth Program	x	x	x	x	x		x
Parent/Child Workshop	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
New Parents As Teachers	x	x		x	x	x	

TABLE C: FAMILY SUPPORT AND EDUCATION ENROLLMENTS AND PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS (1987-88)

PROGRAM CITY,STATE	Total District Enrollment	Percent Minority	Eligibility	Number of Children(C)/ Parents(P) Served	Percent of Eligibile Population Served	Percent Minority	Percent with Family Income <$20,000
Parent Involvement Prog. Guntersville, Alabama	2,005	11.0	targeted	36C+P	25-49	1	100
Parent Participation Preschool Ridgefield, Washington	1,340	1.0	universal	40P	<25	0	50
Shawnee Head Start Dunbar, West Virginia	36,647	9.24	targeted	43C	>75	63	99
Homemaking Consultant Program State College, PA	6,000	3.0	some targeted some universal	279P	<25	2	65
Parent & Family Life Education LaMesa, California	69,933	15.2	universal	7651P	25-49	15.2	62
STAR Parenting South Toms River, NJ	16,000	27.0	universal	207P	<24	NA	NA
Herricks Community Cntr. New Hyde Park, New York	3,221	18.0	universal	350P	25-49	NA	NA
Parents As Teachers Eureka, Missouri	12,938	11.0	universal	1000P	25-49	0	6
Amanda's Place Ft. Lauderdale, Florida	13,700	37.4	universal	736P	<24	30	34
Parent Growth Program Des Moines, Iowa	34,000	18.0	targeted	121C 130P	>75	15	100
Parent/Child Workshop Muskegon, Michigan	2,804	8.3	targeted	220P	<24	27	100
New Parents as Teachers Memphis, Tennessee	107,000	80.0	targeted	67P	<24	100	100

Notes:

Dunbar, WV: The total district enrollment and percentage of minorities reported are county-wide.

Des Moines, IA: Data combines figures for Parent Growth Program 0-5, and Special Parent Growth Program.

Memphis, TN: Data reported for FS & E refers only to NPAT program.

TABLE D: USE OF FACILITIES FOR FAMILY SUPPORT & EDUCATION ACTIVITIES (1987-88)

Program	Public School K-12		Other Public School Bldgs.		Community-based Facilities	Church	Other
	Shared Rms.	Dedicated Rms.	Shared Rms.	Dedicated Rms.			
Parent Involvement Prog. Guntersville, Alabama	x	x					
Parent Participation Preschool Ridgefield, Washington		x					
Shawnee Head Start Dunbar, West Virginia	x	x	x	x	x		x
Homemaking Consultant Program State College, PA	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Parent & Family Life Education LaMesa, California	x	x	x	x	x	x	
STAR Parenting South Toms River, NJ	x	x					
Herricks Community Ctr. New Hyde Park, New York	x		x				
Parents As Teachers Eureka, Missouri	x	x			x	x	
Amanda's Place Ft. Lauderdale, Florida		x		x	x		
Parent Growth Program Des Moines, Iowa			x	x			
Parent/Child Workshop Muskegon, Michigan	x	x					
New Parents as Teachers Memphis, Tennessee	x						

Definitions:

1. Public School (K-12) refers to operating elementary, junior high or middle school, and high school buildings.
2. Other public school buildings include community education centers, district administrative offices having some programming spaces, or other specialized educational services (e.g., special education).
3. Community-based facilities refer to the YMCA, public health offices, community agencies/organizations, rental space in shopping centers or office buildings, public housing community centers, town halls, hospitals, or libraries.
4. Facilities listed as other include apartments, common areas of apartment complexes, or women's shelters.

TABLE E: APPROACHES TO PROGRAM EVALUATION BY SITE (1987-88)

PROGRAM CITY,STATE	Participant Satisfaction Surveys	Collecting Records	Pre-Post Testing
Parent Involvement Prog. Guntersville, Alabama			
Parent Participation Preschool Ridgefield, Washington	x	x	
Shawnee Head Start Dunbar, West Virginia	x	x	x
Homemaking Consultant Program State College, PA	x	x	x
Parent & Family Life Education LaMesa, California	x		x
STAR Parenting South Toms River, NJ	x	x	x
Herricks Community Cntr. New Hyde Park, New York	x		
Parents As Teachers Eureka, Missouri	x	x	
Amanda's Place Ft. Lauderdale, Florida	x	x	
Parent Growth Program Des Moines, Iowa	x	x	x
Parent/Child Workshop Muskegon, Michigan	x	x	x
New Parents as Teachers Memphis, Tennessee	x	x	x

APPENDIX F: Community Education Program Nominations

The information below was provided to the Harvard Family Research Project between December, 1987 and June, 1988. We apologize if any information is no longer current. The following is a supplemental listing of programs sponsored by some form of Community Education that were nominated for our study. All information on programs under school auspices other than Community Education went to the Families and Schools Coordinator of the Harvard Family Research Project.

STATE	PROGRAM NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE	CONTACT PERSON	PARTICIPANTS	SERVICES
ALABAMA	Robinson Community Schools	8400 First Ave.South Birmingham, AL 35206	(205) 833-1812	Phyllis Gooden, Coordinator	-pre-school and school age children and their parents	-child-care during community ed. classes -drop-in child-care -pre-school -parenting workshops -job training -adult education -literacy training -ABE, GED -after-school child care
	Community Education Program	Barbour County Community Education P.O. Box 219 Clayton, AL 39016	(205) 775-8946	Eloise Hall, Coordinator	-4- and 5-year-old children and their parents -school-age children and their parents	-school-readiness seminar for parents of 4-yr.-olds -home visits (Parent and Learning Program) -transportation for in-school tutoring -summer tutoring -ABE, GED -vocational education -literacy training -parent/child workshops -seminars on teen-age pregnancy
ARIZONA	Crane Elementary School District	4250 West 16th St. Yuma, AZ 85364	(602) 782-5183	Karen Kleinz, Community Information Director	-parents and members of the community	-parent workshops -child care and interpreting during workshops -outside speakers -forum on AIDS
CALIFORNIA	Parent Education/Childbirth Education Program	Salinas Adult School Community Education 431 West Alisal St. Salinas, CA 93901	(408) 758-9861	Joyce Wenig, Coordinator Health, Safety, and Parent Education Program	-expectant parents -children birth to five and their parents -parents who wish to learn English	-parent ed. classes -parent/child interaction workshops -parent/child pre-school -toy lending library -childbirth ed. classes
	Bassett Adult School	904 North Willow La Puente, CA 91746	(818) 918-7611	Rita Leroux Principal	-community residents -parents of 2-, 3-, 4-year-olds and school-age children	-parent ed. in English and Spanish -parent/child pre-school -GED, ESL

STATE	PROGRAM NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE	CONTACT PERSON	PARTICIPANTS	SERVICES
CALIFORNIA	Metropolitan Adult Education Program	1671 Park Avenue San Jose, CA 95126	(408) 287-1384	Barbara Schrag, R.N. Assistant Principal	-parents of newborns, pre-schoolers, and learning disabled children -pre-school-age children	-parent ed. classes for early parenting, (infant care, etc) -pre-school observation for foreign-language parents -parent nursery discussion -child observation/parent education -course for parents of learning disabled children
	Adult and Community Education	1054 Carson Drive Sunnyvale, CA 94086	(408) 735-6210	Diana Marich, Parenting Resource Leader	-parents over 16 -pre-school children	-classes for: childbirth prep infant care father/child infant/child CPR parent/child pre-school motor development music development
	Simi Valley Adult School	3150 School Street Simi Valley, CA 93065	(805) 527-4840	Sondra Jones, Assistant Director	-children 0 to 4 and their parents	-parent ed. classes -field trips -parent/child pre-school -GED, ESL, ABE -child observation -parent/child programs
	Adult/Community & Vocational Education	Santa Clara Unified School District 1840 Benton Street Santa Clara, CA 95050	(408) 984-6220	Barbara A. Malaspina, Division Manager	-expectant parents -single parents -parents of pre-schoolers -high-stress parents -mothers of children birth to 3	-parent ed. classes -parent/child pre-school -CPR training -skills for day-care providers -positive parenting workshop -GED, ABE, ESL
	Palo Alto Adult School	50 Embarcadero Road Palo Alto, CA 94301	(415) 329-3752	Henry W. Page, Principal	-expectant parents -children 0-5 and their parents	-Lamaze classes -parent/child classes -parent/child pre-school -parent discussion groups -speakers -films
	Fairfield-Suisun Adult School	1100 Civic Center Drive Fairfield, CA 94533	(707) 422-5610	Jan Hannigan, Principal	-expectant parents -children 0 to 4 and their parents -parents of 6th to 8th graders	-childbirth prep. -parent/child pre-school -parent/toddler classes -ABE

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CALIFORNIA	Parent Education Department	Mt. Diablo Adult Education Loma Vista Adult Center 1266 San Carlos Ave. Concord, CA 94518	(415) 685-7340	Margot Robb Tobias, Chairperson	-parents of children birth to adolescence -pregnant and parenting teens -expectant mothers -children 0-6 and siblings	-pre-natal ed. -parent/infant ed. -parent/toddler ed. -mother groups with child care -parent/child pre-school -seminars
FLORIDA	Adult and Community Education Department	Duval County Public Schools 1701 Prudential Drive, Jacksonville, FLA 32207	(904) 390-2000	James B. Rush, Supervisor, Community Education	-school-age children and their parents	-classes for: parents of newborns infant/child CPR Early Childhoood Family Education single parenting classes
	Windy Hill Elementary	3831 Forest Blvd. Jacksonville, FLA 32216	(904) 641-1686	Cynthia Gilmore, Asst. Principal, Community School	-parents of children age 3 & 4	-community workshops -parent ed. discussions -book lending
	Parents-N-Kids Newsletter	J.C. Mitchell Community School 2401 N.W. 3rd Avenue Boca Raton, FLA 33431	(407) 338-1468	Allen Rice, Assistant Principal, Community Education	-parents -teachers -child care providers	-newsletter -information on children pre-natal to 8
	Adolescent Parenting Project	School Board of Pinellas County Largo Curriculum and Instruction Center 205-4th Street SW Largo, FLA 33540	(813) 585-9951	Sherry N. Oliver, Director, Adult and Community Education	-teen mothers, 16+ -infants, 3-18 mos. -low-income mothers	-diploma or GED -child development classes -parent-supervised child care -support services
	Upstairs School	Adult and Community Education Department School District of Flagler County P.O. Box 755, Bunnell, FLA 32010	(904) 437-3351	Steven V. Edwards, Director Adult/Community Education	-pregnant teens -teen mothers	-individualized high-school credit program -family living classes -parent-supervised child care -mother/child health care
	PREP	School Board of Pinellas County Largo Curriculum and Instruction Center 205-4th Street SW Largo, FLA 33540	(813) 585-9951	Sherry Oliver, Director Adult and Community Education	-pregnant teens	-GED -child care up to 3 months -childbirth education and exercise -resource speakers -parenting skills

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FLORIDA	The Parent Center	Division of Instruction, Adult and Community Education P.O. Box 24690 West Palm Beach, FLA 33416-4690	(407) 684-5110	Lynn M. Smith, Parent Services Consultant	-parents of developmentally delayed children, ages 3-7 -single parents and homemakers -expectant and new parents -teen parents -Spanish-speaking parents	-CPR classes -STEP -STEP-teens -STEP in Spanish -parent/child classes -parent/child classes for developmentally delayed children, age 3-7 -referrals
ILLINOIS	Bright Futures	Stone Early Education Center 1072 W. North Street Galesburg, IL 61401	(309) 343-9848	Maury Lyon, Principal	-teen parents -adults involved with children -children	-resource room -toy lending -videotape lending -literacy classes/tutoring -parenting classes -special presentations -transportation -child care -GED -parent/child pre-school
IOWA	Community/Adult Education	Des Moines Public Schools, Des Moines Independent Community School District, 6401 College Des Moines, IA 50311-1800	(515) 242-7701	Ann Laurence, Pre-school Coordinator	-parents -divorced parents -children 3-5	-STEP -parenting classes -pre-school -GED -child care
	Northwest Iowa Technical College	Highway 18 West Sheldon, IA 51201	(712) 324-2587	Kathy Brock, Manager, Community Services	-parents of children 0-12 -children 3-6 and their parents	-day-long workshops -parent/child activities -STEP -lectures
KENTUCKY	Parent Resource Center	Fayette County Public Schools Division of Adult and Community Education 701 East Main Street Lexington, KY 40502	(606) 281-0100	Sherry Piersol, Coordinator, Community Education	-low-income, inner-city parents -single parents -parents of adolescents	-parenting classes -parent support group -child care during parent classes -GED -information and referral -parent/child art classes -parent/child exercise classes -infant CPR

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KENTUCKY	Boone County Community Education Program	Boone County Schools P.O. Box 37, 8330 U.S. 42 Florence, KY 41042	(606) 283-1003	Donna Arnzen Dahmann, Director of Community Education And Volunteer Services	-parents of: -exceptional children -potential substance abusers -children 2-12	-parent ed classes -advocacy training -STEP -GED
	Parenting Classes	Owensboro Public Schools 1335 West 11th St. P.O. Box 746 Owensboro, KY 42302-0746	(502) 686-1000	Lynn C. Heady, Director, Community/Adult Education	-parents of school-age children -parents required to attend by juvenile-court judges or social worker	-parenting classes -outside speakers -child care during classes -community resource guide
	Parent Resource Center	3449 Old Dam Court, Bldg. 6 Greenup, KY 41144	(606) 473-7739	Regina Stout, Coordinator, Community Education	-parents of special-needs children -pre-schoolers and their parents	-support group -newsletter -speakers -summer free-lunch program -parent/child camp for transition to kindergarten
LOUISIANA	Louisiana Center for Community Education	Metropolitan College University of New Orleans Lakefront, New Orleans, LA 70148	(504) 286- 7187	Carl Drichta, Dean	-parents of children 18 months-18 years	-parenting classes -lunchtime lectures
MARYLAND	Parent/Child Program	Governor Thomas Jefferson High School, 1501 North Market Street Frederick, MD 21701	(301) 694-1829	Teena L. Broadrup, Parent/child Specialist and Program Director	-teen parents -abusive parents -battered spouses -any parent accompanied by a child, 0 to 10 yrs. -pregnant women	-pre-school/summer school -literacy training -motor-development classes -outside speakers -crisis intervention -parent/child activities -health care ed. -booklets on home as a learning area -information and referral -access to evening high school -support groups -discussion groups -GED

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MARYLAND	Working Families Center (of the Parent Education Program)	12518 Greenly Street Silver Spring, MD 20906	(301) 942-8304	Georgia Lewis Parent Education Specialist	-parents -day care providers -children, 0 to 5	-day-care enrichment program -advocacy -drop-in center -toy and book lending -evening and Saturday activities -ESL, GED -information and referral -parent conferences -warm line -lunchtime seminars at work sites -job training
MICHIGAN	Family Living Center (part of Adult Family Living Program)	801 Cherry S.E. Grand Rapids, MI 49506	(616) 456-4483	Yvonne Burgin, Director	Family Living Center: -adults having difficulty with children -adults referred by Child Welfare -developmentally delayed parents Adult Family Living Program: -parents of children 0-18	FLC -classes in: -life skills -home management -child care -educational credit for classes -transportation AFLP -classes in: -child development -step- parenting -infant/toddler exercise -parenting (0-18 yrs.)
	Williamston Community Schools	418 Highland Street Williamston, MI 48895	(517) 655-3530	Jeri Mifflin, Director	-all children and adults in community	-STEP -step-parenting classes -parent ed. classes -infant/child CPR -parent/child classes -support group for parents of children with learning disabilities -"parent's night out" child care -job training -GED -literacy tutors -vocational programs
	Carman-Ainsworth Community Schools	G-3475 W. Court St. Flint, MI 48532	(313) 732-9770	Phil Hartman, Director of Community Services	-pre-schoolers and their parents -school-age children and their parents	-newsletter -resource materials -pre-k/pre-school -parent education classes -parent discussion groups -tutoring -job training -adult high school completion -GED -child care -open houses -latch-key program

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MICHIGAN	Carman-Ainsworth Community Schools cont.					-ABE -1-on-1 literacy tutoring -Headstart(mandatory parent involvement) -home visits to parents of school-age children
	Algonac Community Learning Center	308 S. Parker Marine City, MI 48039	(313) 765-3535	Ida Basinski, Director	-pre-school children and their parents	-early childhood ed. coupled with parent ed. -JTPA opportunities -literacy training -parent discussion groups (in Human Behavior classes)
MISSOURI	Ladue Early Childhood Center	10601 Clayton Road St. Louis, MO 63131	(314) 993-5724	Estie Pruett	-children 0-5 and their parents -working parents -parents of twins	-parent/child classes, including art and gym -parent ed. and support -developmental screening -lectures -child care during lectures -pre-school -parent/child summer programs -Parents As Teachers (home visits)
NEW YORK	Consumer and Homemaking Program	School District of the City of Niagara Falls, Office of Continuing Community Education P.O. Box 399 Niagara Falls, NY 14302	(716) 284-3338	Gerardo Franciosa, Adult & Basic Education Administrator	-adults living in economically depressed areas	-Family Life Conference -information and referral on child care -parent/child classes -classes in: -pre-employability skills -consumer and home management -community relations -day care
	Parents and Children Together (PACT)	Binghamton City School District Community Resource Center, MacArthur School 1123 Vestal Ave. Binghamton, NY 13903	(607) 772-0189	Mary Haus, Project Coordinator	-expectant parents (starting in third trimester) -children birth to three and parents -parents of children 3-4	-home visits -parent groups -referral -PACT Plus -toy/book lending -workshops -comprehensive monitoring of child development
OHIO	Parent and Child Education	Martin School 1253 3rd Street S.E. Canton, OH 44705	(216) 454-6877	Aurelia Zoretich, Program Developer, Teacher/Coordinator	-parents -adults involved with children -children 0-3 (informally to 6)	-crisis intervention -counseling -information and referrral -advocacy -book/toy lending -parent/child activities -support groups -home visits -drop-ins -unofficial warm line

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TEXAS	Northside Independent School District Community Education	5900 Evers Road San Antonio, TX 78238	(512) 684-5485	Karen Norman, Counselor/Co-ordinator	-day-care providers -step-parents -teen parents -single parents and displaced homemakers (PHASE program)	-teen-parenting classes -inservice for day-care workers -peer support group -counseling -referrals -job training -child care -ABE, GED -STEP
	Weatherford Community Education	P.O. Drawer N Weatherford, TX 76806	(817) 594-7458	Jane Westbrook, Director	-parents -day-care providers -teen parents -single parents -displaced homemakers -pre-schoolers	-parenting classes -videos on parenting -discussion groups -ABE, ESL, GED, -literacy tutoring -voc. training
	Fairfield Independent School District Community Education	615 Post Oak Road Fairfield, TX 75840	(214) 389-2532	Lynn Shaver, Supervisor, Curriculum/Community Education	-parents -day-care providers -children 3-5	-child development classes for day-care providers and parents -story time for children and parents -GED, ABE
	Community Education	Belton Independent School District P.O. Box 269 Belton, TX 76513-0269	(817) 939-1881	Sharon Dolenc, Coordinator	-parents -day-care providers	-adult literacy -GED at home -adult ed. -day-care certification -job training -early childhood ed. with parent ed. -ABE -ESL -training for tutors
	Cedar Hill Independent School District Community Education	P.O. Box 248 Cedar Hill, TX 75104	(214) 291-1581	May Bingham, Director	-single parents -high school dropouts -at-risk students -"anyone who can profit by attendance"	-parent seminars -GED -literacy -drug awareness for parents -health awareness
	Extended School-Day Program	Lewisville Independent School District 1800 Timbercreek Road, P.O. Box 217 Lewisville, TX 75067	(214) 539-1551	Joyce Pike, Director, Adult & Community Education	-children from kindergarten to fifth grade	-daily activities for children -monthly newsletter for parents -community speakers for children

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TEXAS	New Braunfels Independent School District Community School Concept Program	New Braunfels Independent School District 430 West Hill Street New Braunfels, TX 78130	(512) 620-6200	Irene Tello Petrisky, Community School Concept Coordinator	-parents of elementary school-age children	-presentations on school and community services (English & Spanish) -parent/student activities -classes on health and nutrition -child care during presentations
UTAH	Parent Education Resource Center	100 South, 200 East Farmington, UT 84025	(801) 451-5071	Beverly Dawson, Director	-any parent and child living in the county	-toy/book lending -information and referrals -parent education -short-term counseling -child development ed. -evening workshops on parenting -STEP
WISCONSIN	Parenting Education Program	Waukesha County Technical Institute 800 Main St., Pewaukee, WI 53072	(414) 691-5566	MaryAnn Spangler, Manager, Home Economics Department, Service Occupations Division	-parents of pre-schoolers -children 0-3 and their parents -adoptive parents	-classes on: -nutrition -adoption -parenting pre-schoolers -parent/child activities -outside speakers
	Positive Living	Wisconsin Indian Head Technical College Rice Lake Campus 1900 College Drive Rice Lake, WI 54868	(715) 822-4940	Margaret Forrester, Community Supervisor, Home Economics	-disadvantaged families -single parents -elderly	-seminars on parenting skills -parent/child enrichment classes -family relationship classes at Headstart & battered women's shelter -nutrition classes using USDA commodities
	Community Education	Plymouth Jt. School District 125 Highland Ave. Plymouth, WI 53073	(414) 893-0987	Marvin Paulson, Director	-parents of children and teenagers	-STEP -STEP-teens -child care during classes -child development classes
	Waunakee Community School District	School Drive Waunakee, WI 53579	(608) 849-8161	Joe Severa, Community Education Coordinator	-parents and children, all ages -parents 25 and younger	-workshop on adolescence -latch-key class -child care -Positive Parenting class (Parents 25 and younger) -Family Times class for children 8 and older and parents -parent/child activities

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